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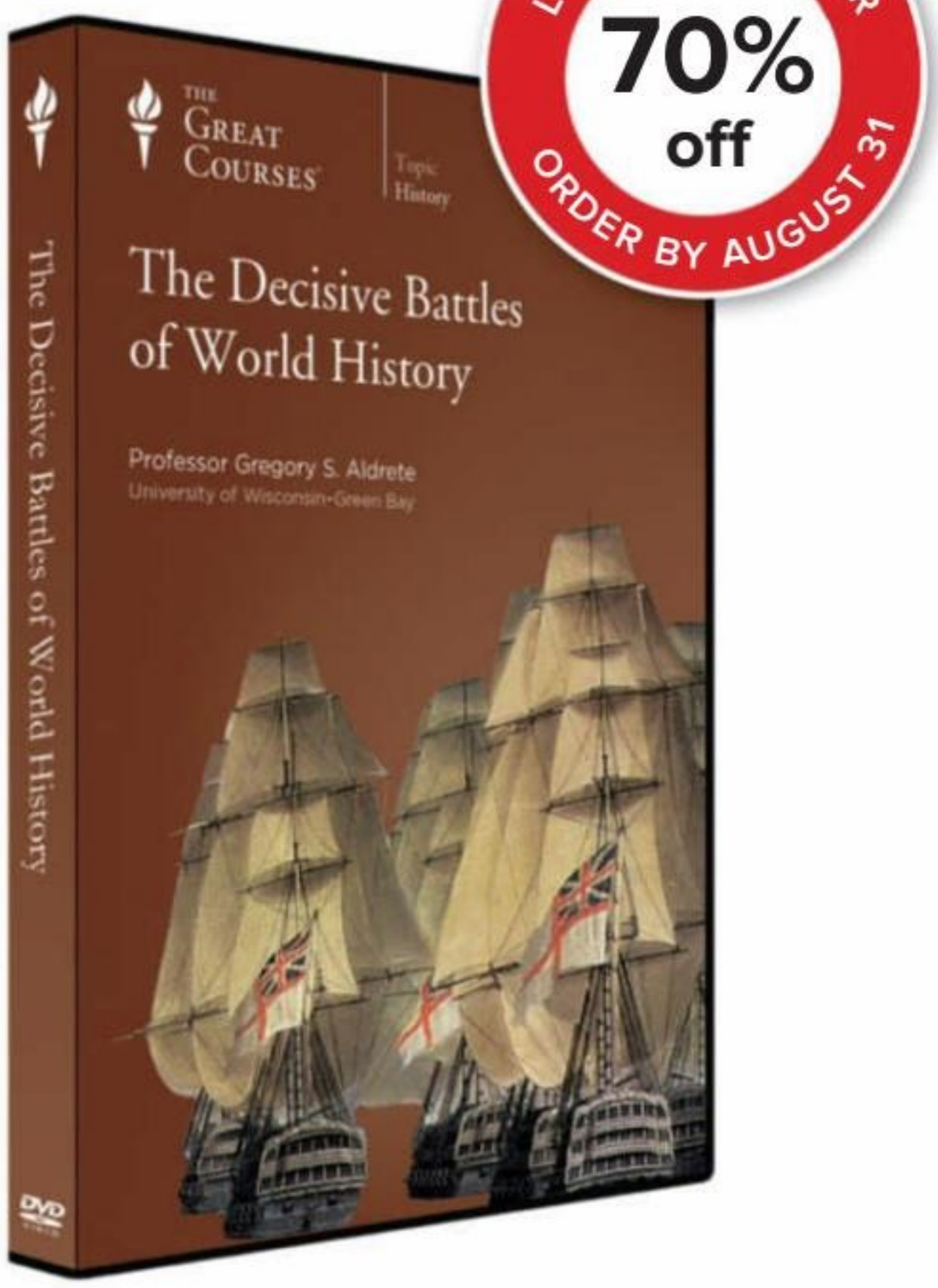

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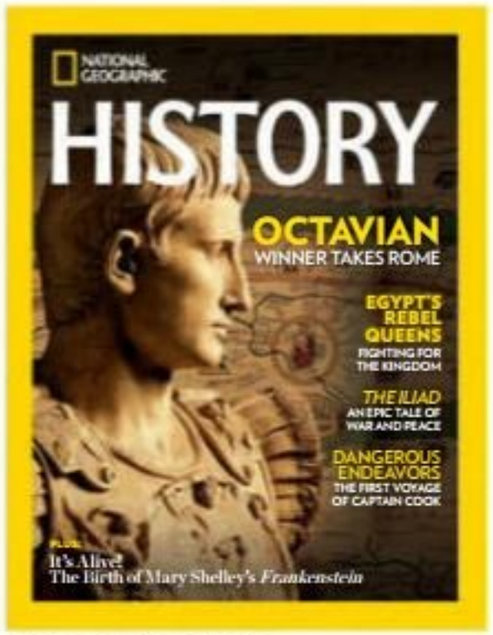
In terms of storytelling, it would seem that fiction might have an edge over nonfiction. Knowing the ending can sap a story of its suspense. For instance (spoiler alert), it is very well known that Octavian defeats Antony and Lepidus to become Rome's first emperor. When looking at his regal statues and imperial monuments, that victory can seem almost preordained.

But history has an edge here: To the men who lived it, nothing was certain. The real threats faced by Octavian—his great-uncle's murder, the challenge to his status as Julius Caesar's heir, and all the revolts, riots, and betrayals that followed—reveal how precarious his outcome was. The numerous obstacles he overcame highlight the exceptional character at the center of his story, who persisted despite having no idea how things were going to turn out.

Amy Briggs

Amy Briggs, Executive Editor



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National Geographic History (ISSN 2380-3878) is published bimonthly in January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December by National Geographic Partners, LLC, 1145 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Volume 3, Number 3. $29 per year for U.S. delivery. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. **SUBSCRIBER:** If the Postal Service alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within two years. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *National Geographic History*, P.O. Box 62138, Tampa, FL 33662. In Canada, agreement number 40063649, return undeliverable Canadian addresses to *National Geographic History*, P.O. Box 4412 STA A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 3W2. We occasionally make our subscriber names available to companies whose products or services might be of interest to you. If you prefer not to be included, you may request that your name be removed from promotion lists by calling 1-800-647-5463. To opt out of future direct mail from other organizations, visit DMAchoice.org, or mail a request to: DMA Choice, c/o Data & Marketing Association, P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512.

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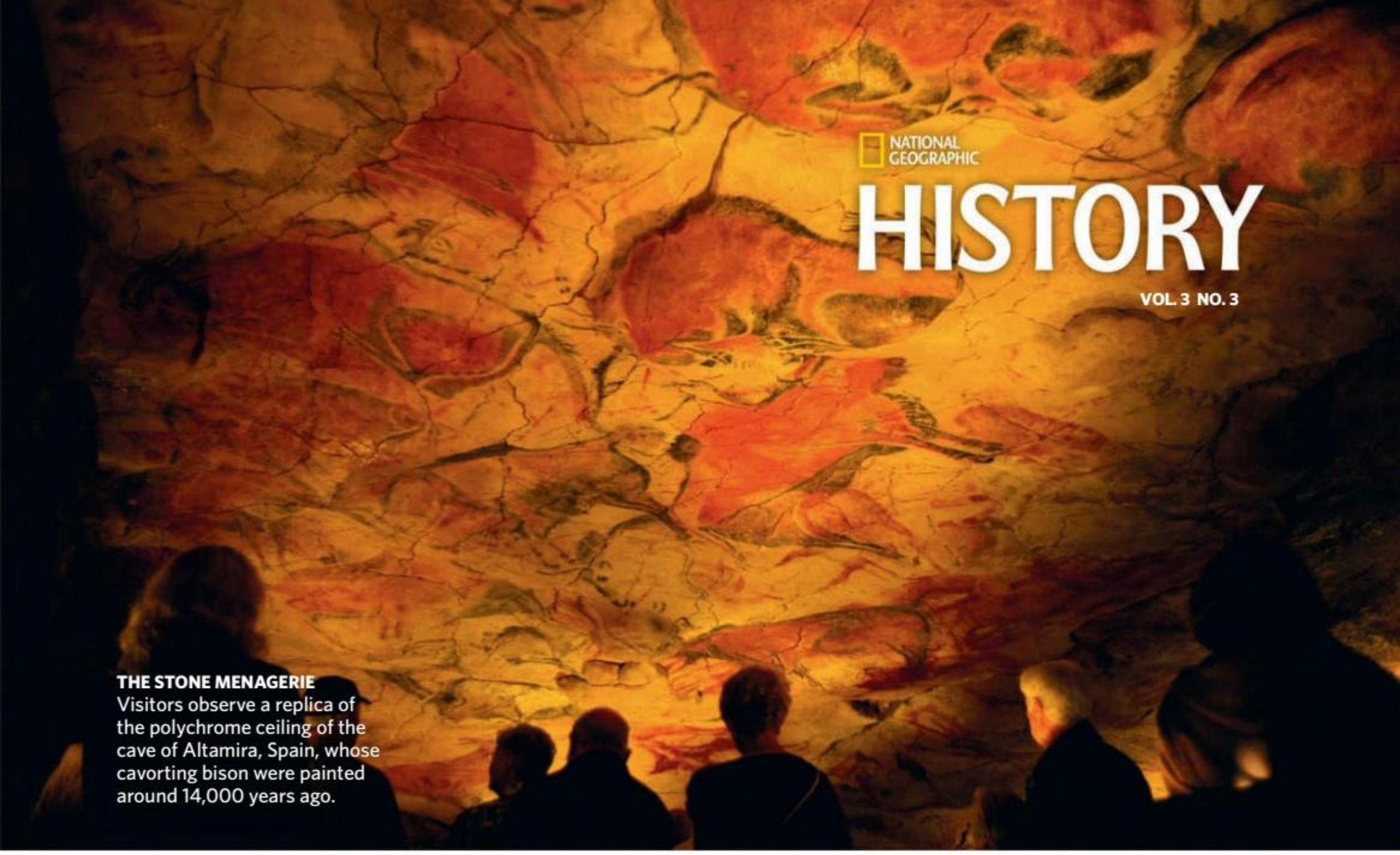

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Visitors observe a replica of the polychrome ceiling of the cave of Altamira, Spain, whose cavorting bison were painted around 14,000 years ago.

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ARIS MESSINIS/GETTY IMAGES

LAYLA SALIH was a curator at the Mosul Museum before ISIS invaded the city in 2014. After the militants were driven from eastern Mosul in 2017, Salih headed up the team assessing the damage to the Nebi Yunus shrine. She also surveyed the ancient site of Nimrud, another victim of ISIS's destructive campaign.

WAR ZONE ARCHAEOLOGY

From the Rubble of Mosul, a Buried Palace Emerges

Archaeologists documenting ISIS destruction in an immortal Iraqi city have made new discoveries regarding Mosul's ancient Assyrian past.

The site of the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh is no stranger to the ravages of war. Enemies of the Assyrian Empire sacked it in 612 B.C. Most recently, the forces of the Islamic State (ISIS) and the Iraqi Army have been wrestling for control of the site in northern Iraq, now called Mosul. This latest conflict has resulted in the destruction of irreplaceable historic sites, but it has also revealed previously hidden finds in the process.

ISIS first swept into Mosul in 2014, catching the attention of the world. Home to a plethora of ancient shrines sacred to many cultures, Mosul saw widespread architectural destruction during ISIS's nearly three-year occupation. After taking the city, ISIS closed Mosul's museum and forced the city's historians and archaeologists to flee or go into hiding.

Because of its association with Nineveh, Mosul has long held a special place in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. The Prophet Jonah (as he is known in the Old Testament) or Yunus (as he is known in the Koran) is ordered by God to preach to the people there.

Built on one of the mounds covering ancient Nineveh, the mosque of Nebi Yunus was a renovation of an earlier Christian structure. Both faiths hold that this location is where Jonah is buried. ISIS considers veneration of tombs and shrines to be sinful.

ARIS MESSINIS/GETTY IMAGES

DUG BY ISIS to steal antiquities beneath Mosul's shrine of Nebi Yunus, tunnels such as this one have enabled Iraqi archaeologists to salvage exciting new finds from a previously unexplored seventh-century B.C. Assyrian palace, including a stone relief of a goddess sprinkling the water of life (left).

NG MAPS/THEODORE SICKLEY

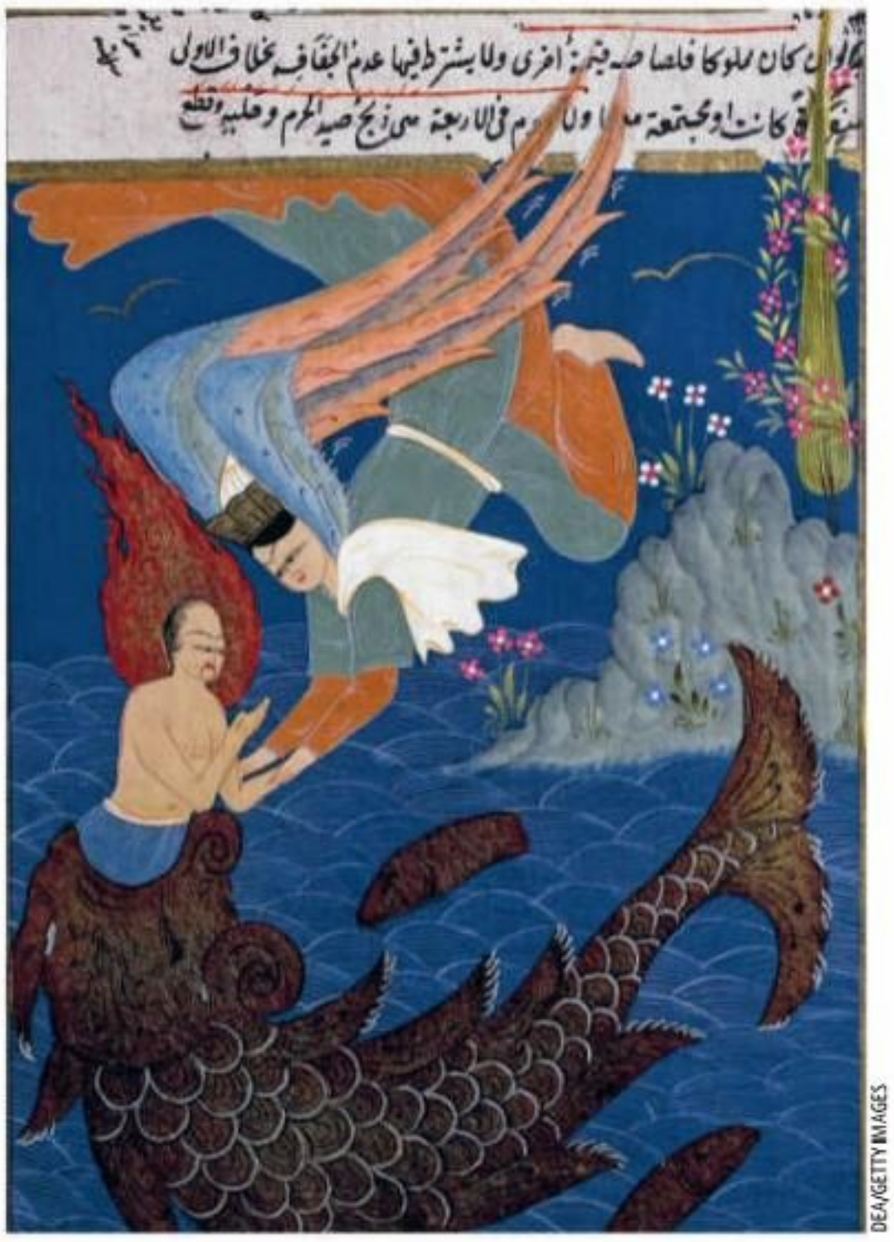
They declared the building to be tainted by "apostasy" and destroyed the Nebi Yunus mosque in July 2014.

Many of Mosul's architectural gems have shared a similar fate. The city's Nebi Jirjis mosque, dedicated to the figure known to Christians as St. George, was also destroyed by the group in 2014.

When Mosul's eastern districts came back under control of the Iraqi Army in 2017, local archaeologists began to take stock of the damage done to sacred sites in the region. Sifting through the rubble,

A WHALE OF A BIBLICAL TALE

THE SHRINE OF NEBI YUNUS (Prophet Jonah in the Old Testament) once stood in Mosul because of the city's association with one of the best known Bible stories: Jonah and the Whale. In the Book of Jonah from the Old Testament, God orders Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach to the wicked people there. Jonah tries to escape his fate and sails away in a boat. God creates a vicious storm, tossing the boat in the waves. Jonah knows he is to blame and tells his fellow sailors to throw him overboard. He is swallowed by a "great fish" (commonly interpreted as a whale, although the text does not specify exactly what kind of beast swallowed Jonah) where he spends three days and nights praying for forgiveness. God orders the fish to spit out Jonah, who, once on dry land, hastens to Nineveh to fulfill his mission. Nineveh, along with Babylon, was a place equated in Jewish tradition with military power as well as moral corruption. The Book of Nahum, written some time after the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C., declares the city's demise as divinely ordained: "The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh: 'You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the images and idols that are in the temple of your gods'" (Nahum 1:14).



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THE FISH SPITS OUT THE PROPHET JONAH IN AN ILLUSTRATION FROM A 16TH-CENTURY TURKISH MANUSCRIPT, REFLECTING THE IMPORTANCE OF JONAH'S STORY IN JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND MUSLIM TRADITIONS.

NURPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

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THE SECURING OF monuments in eastern Mosul by the Iraqi Army in 2017 came too late for the 12th-century shrine of Nebi Yunus (right), decimated in 2014 by ISIS. Iraqi soldiers have secured the ruins of Nebi Yunus (above) as well as the ancient Assyrian palace (below). An estimated 66 sites in the Mosul area have been destroyed or damaged by ISIS.

ARIS MESSINIS/GETTY IMAGES

archaeologists discovered that ISIS had tunneled under the remains of the Nebi Yunus site, exposing the ruins of an unexplored ancient palace from the Assyrian Empire. Despite the damage done, inscriptions and a relief found in the tunnels have aroused huge archaeological interest in the new artifacts.

Assyrian Splendor

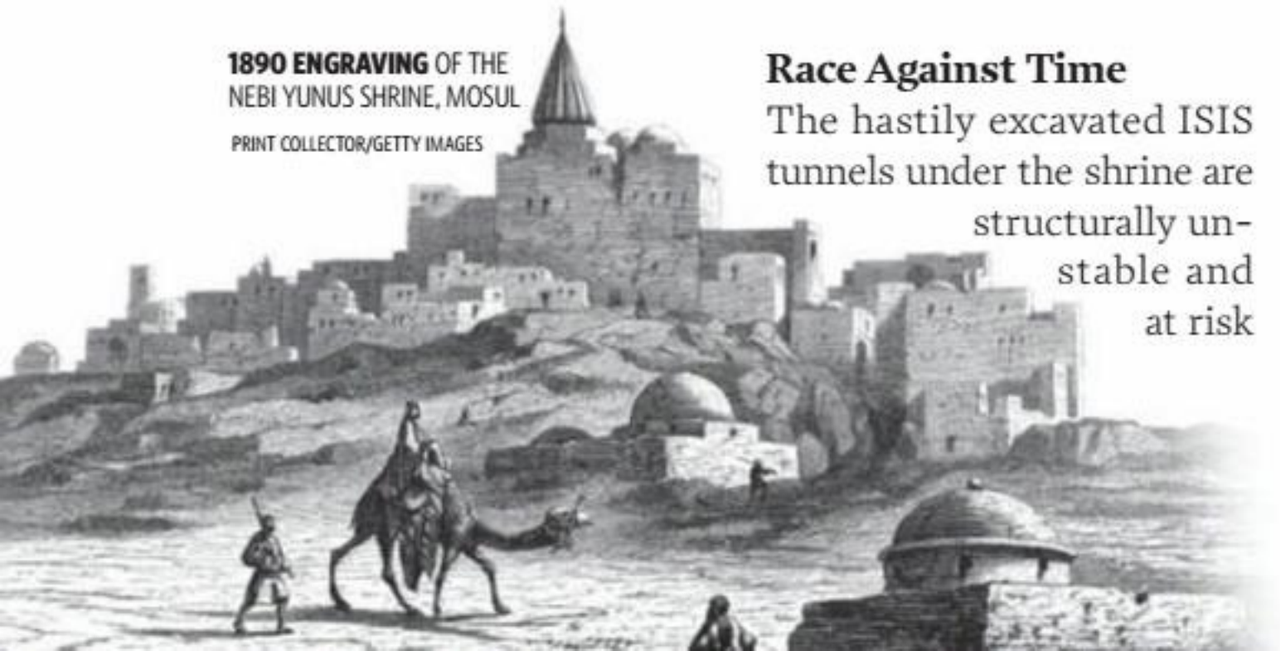
The Assyrian palace is thought to date back to the late eighth and early seventh centuries B.C. Although initial excavations of the site's exterior were carried out in 1852, the 1950s, and 2004, they did not reach farther than the palace's entrance.

Studying the palace interior, archaeologists have now established that the structure was built for King Sennacherib, who ruled circa 704-681 B.C. and made Nineveh his capital. He is mentioned in the biblical Book of Kings for his assault on Jerusalem.

Layla Salih, leader of the archaeological team cataloging the site, spoke of her frustration that ISIS had looted items from the palace. Although some of these items have reportedly been recovered, it is feared many treasures were sold on the black market to raise funds for the terrorist organization.

Despite the looting, many important artifacts did remain intact, and archaeologists are now learning more about the Assyrian Empire through them. Deep in one of the tunnels Salih's team discovered a marble slab with an inscription that researchers believe refers to Sennacherib's son, King Esarhaddon, who is thought to have expanded the palace during his rule. He is celebrated for rebuilding Babylon in the mid-600s B.C., and for the extension of Assyrian power into Egypt. Inscriptions from this era are rare, and hope is high that their contents will yield new information.

Elsewhere in the tunnel complex, which twists and turns for nearly a mile, Salih's team discovered a relief depicting an Assyrian goddess sprinkling the water of life over the mortals under her protection. Finds of this size and detail are also a rarity. Professor Eleanor Robson of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq believes the relief may have adorned the palace wing housing the women.



1890 ENGRAVING OF THE NEBI YUNUS SHRINE, MOSUL
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Race Against Time

The hastily excavated ISIS tunnels under the shrine are structurally unstable and at risk of collapse. Salih's team face the challenge of cataloging and protecting their contents while trying to shore up the tunnels before any sections start to cave in. The archaeologists must also consider the issues raised by working in a city traumatized by violence.

Since the liberation of Mosul's principal museum in March 2017, the future for the city's rich historical holdings is looking somewhat brighter. Despite the soul-rending task of cataloging what has been plundered, defaced, or destroyed, the discovery of the royal palace has put local archaeologists back on the path of constructive research.

Researchers from the British Institute for the Study of Iraq are offering help to local archaeologists to document the new palace. UNESCO—the cultural and educational arm of the United Nations—is also investigating ways it can help in the struggle to secure this valuable site for generations to come. ■

The Conundrum of Alfred Nobel

The man behind the famous Nobel Prizes was a paradox: An arms dealer in life, Nobel decided in death to use his dynamite fortune to fund a foundation dedicated to progress and peace.

From Death Merchant to Peacemaker

1833

Born in Stockholm on October 21, Alfred Nobel is the third son born to Immanuel Nobel, a Swedish industrialist, and Caroline Andriette Ahlsell.

1864

An explosion at a Nobel explosives factory in Stockholm kills several people, including Alfred's younger brother, Emil.

1867

Alfred develops a new explosive employing nitroglycerin and names it dynamite. The invention brings him both fame and fortune.

1896

Alfred dies in Italy and bequeaths the bulk of his fortune to fund yearly prizes in his name, including a peace prize.

1901

Jean-Henri Dunant and Frédéric Passy are co-recipients of the first Nobel Peace Prize.

For nearly a millennium, gunpowder reigned supreme as the world's premium explosive. Stable and safe, it was ideal for munitions. But after the industrial revolution in the 19th century, activities such as mining increasingly necessitated far more explosive power.

In 1847 a breakthrough came with the development of nitroglycerin, an extraordinarily strong—and terribly dangerous—compound. Its volatility gave it power but led to deadly accidents. The challenge for inventors was to marry the power of nitroglycerin to the stability of gunpowder. The man who did it was Alfred Nobel. It was an achievement that made him not only rich but also troubled. Nobel's complex mix of genius, business acumen, and conscience led to the creation of the world's most famous awards for positive contributions to humanity.

Travels and Tragedy

Alfred's father, Immanuel Nobel, was a Swedish businessman and inventor who set himself up in Russia in the service of the tsars. His factory provided arms for the Russian Army during the Crimean War in the 1850s. But in 1859, a few years after the war ended and the demand for arms fell away, the business went bankrupt. Alfred, who was living with his parents in St. Petersburg and had begun his chemistry studies there, now returned to Stockholm, where he pursued research into explosives, including work with nitroglycerin.

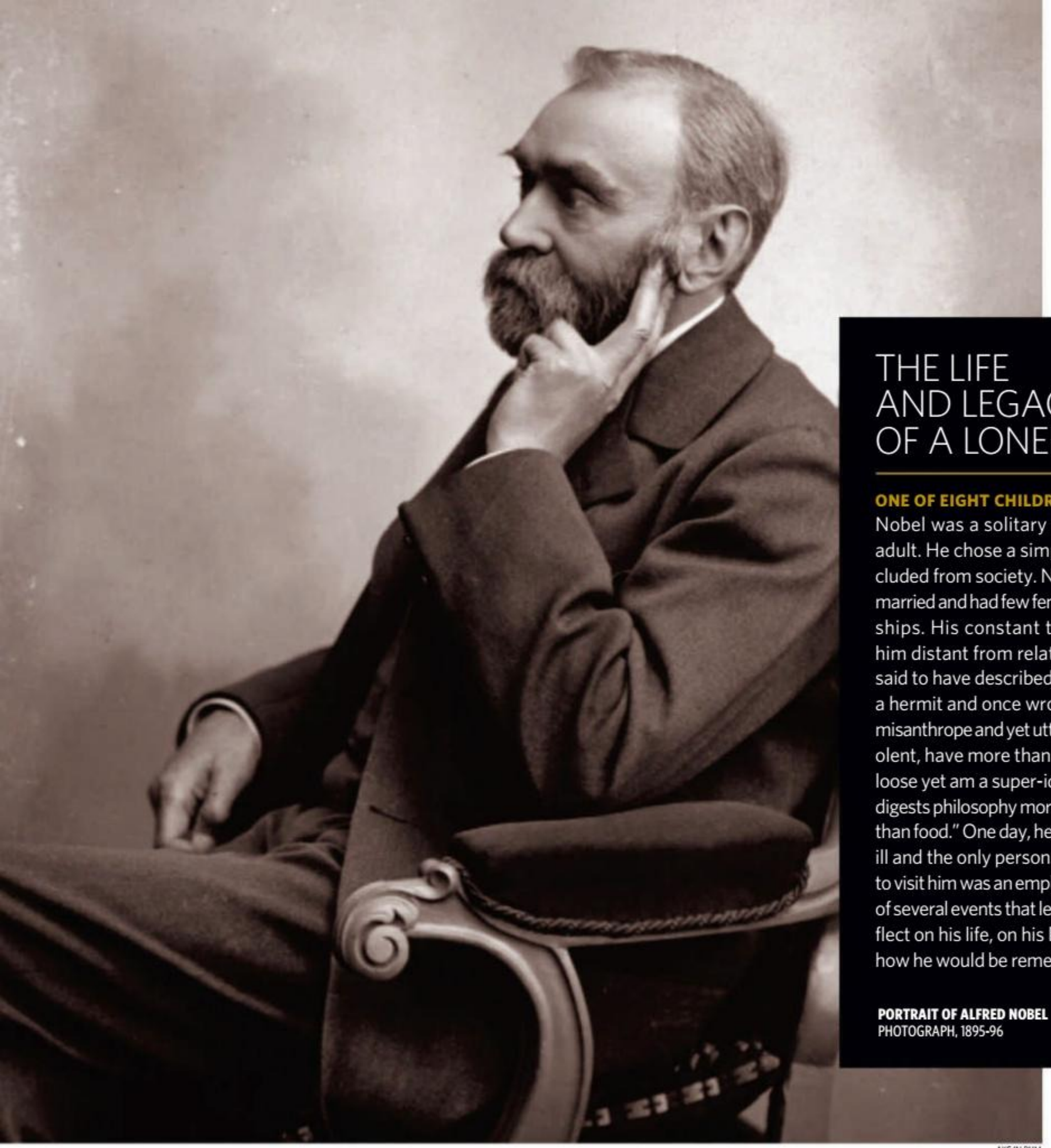
The Nobels experienced nitroglycerin's devastating power in 1864. An explosion at the Nobel factory in Stockholm killed several people, among them Alfred's younger brother, Emil. Far from discouraging Nobel, the tragedy may even have galvanized him in his research and strengthened his resolve to find a safer alternative.

Three years later, in 1867, Nobel stumbled on the discovery that would make him a household name. Purely by chance, he observed that the porous sedimentary rock known as diatomaceous earth has the property of absorbing nitroglycerin. On testing the resulting mixture he found, to his excitement, that it was an effective explosive but far more stable than pure nitroglycerin. Nobel termed the compound "dynamite" from the Greek *dynamis*, meaning "power."

The discovery brought him immediate wealth and recognition. While others might have rested on their laurels, Nobel continued researching more effective

DYNAMITE, NOBEL MUSEUM, STOCKHOLM
FAI/ALBUM

Nobel's brother's death in a nitroglycerin explosion spurred his efforts to find a safer alternative.



THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF A LONER

ONE OF EIGHT CHILDREN, Alfred Nobel was a solitary man as an adult. He chose a simple life, secluded from society. Nobel never married and had few female friendships. His constant travel kept him distant from relatives. He is said to have described himself as a hermit and once wrote: "I am a misanthrope and yet utterly benevolent, have more than one screw loose yet am a super-idealist who digests philosophy more efficiently than food." One day, he fell gravely ill and the only person who came to visit him was an employee—one of several events that led him to reflect on his life, on his legacy, and how he would be remembered.

PORTRAIT OF ALFRED NOBEL
PHOTOGRAPH, 1895-96

AKG/ALBUM

weapons. In 1875 he invented a mixture of nitroglycerin and nitrocellulose that was more resistant to water and even more powerful than the original formulation of dynamite.

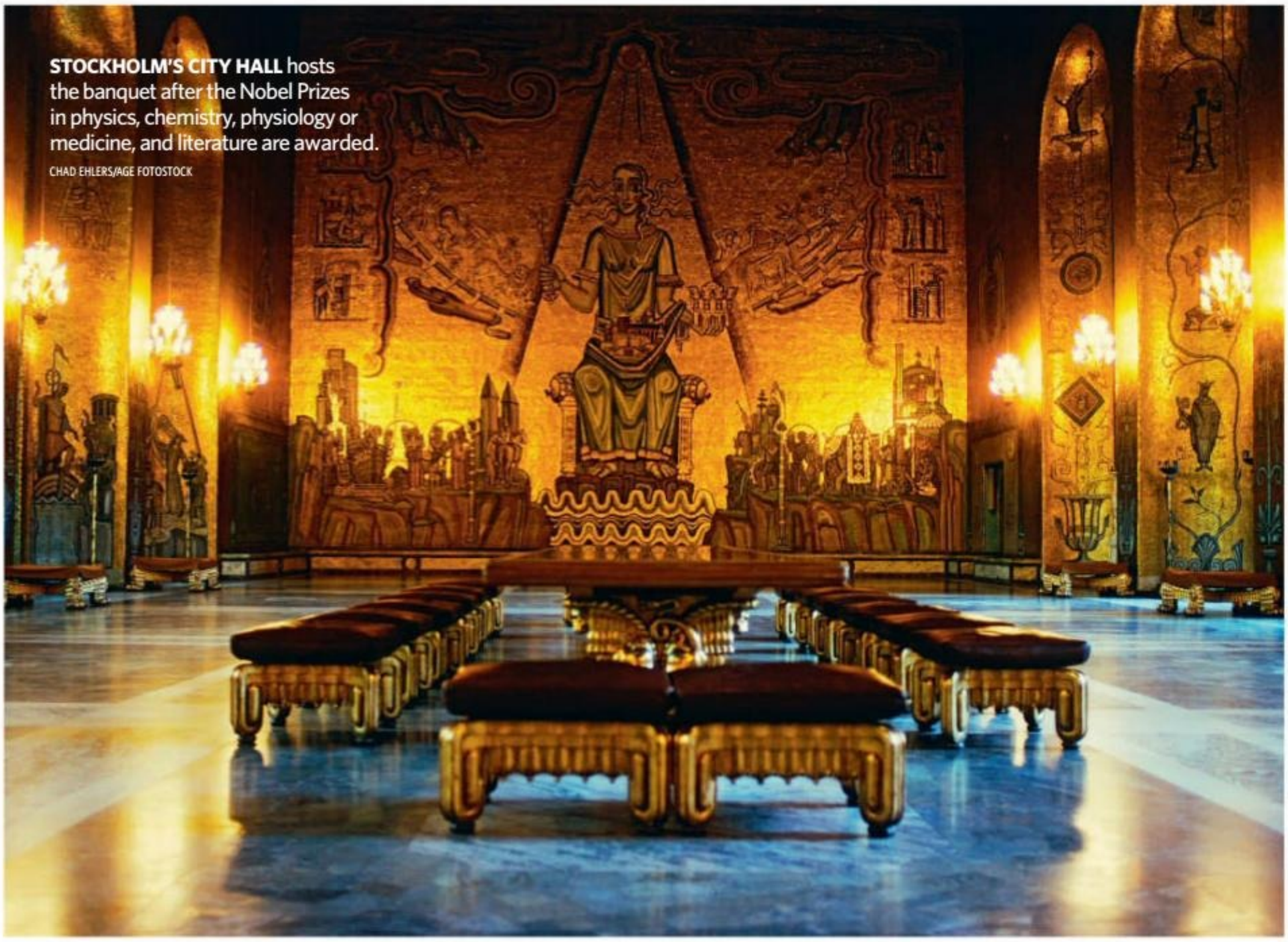
Alfred Nobel was only 63 when he died at a villa in San Remo, Italy, in 1896. When his will was read to his relatives, there was, understandably, a huge interest in who would inherit his fortune. To their astonishment and anger, they were left only a fraction of it. Nobel had bequeathed the lion's share to endow a new foundation that would, every year, award prizes to outstanding figures in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and peace.

An Unlikely Pacifist

What was it that prompted Alfred Nobel to create the endowment and the prestigious prizes? The answer may lie in a case of mistaken identity. In 1888 his brother Ludvig died. A French journalist mistakenly believed that it was Alfred who had died and wrote the headline: "*Le marchand de la mort est mort*—The merchant of death is dead." It has been suggested that Nobel was deeply affected by this incident, and it caused him to reflect on his legacy.

The Nobel family's links to the arms trade were undeniable. Shortly before his death, Nobel acquired the Bofors foundry (today a major Swedish defense firm). Nor did Nobel harbor especially progressive views. He opposed women's right to vote and acted in a notably paternalistic manner toward his factory workers.

At the same time, he had always made an effort to be a patron of the sciences



STOCKHOLM'S CITY HALL hosts the banquet after the Nobel Prizes in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, and literature are awarded.

CHAD EHLERS/AGE FOTOSTOCK

and a supporter of numerous causes. His posthumous prizes can be understood in the context of the age. Nobel, it seemed, was influenced by thinkers such as his acquaintance Baroness Bertha von Suttner—later, a recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize—whose 1889 pacifist novel *Lay Down Your Arms* was a best seller. There is some evidence that Nobel believed that dynamite would be instrumental in bringing about world peace. He once wrote to von Suttner: "Perhaps my factories will put an end to war sooner than your congresses: on the day that two army corps can mutually annihilate each other in a second, all civilized nations will surely recoil with horror and disband their troops."

Prizes and Polemic

Nobel's will named a series of institutions as responsible for awarding the prizes in his name. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences was to take charge of the physics and chemistry prizes, the Karolinska Institute would award the medicine prize, the Swedish Academy would give the literature prize, and the peace prize was to be decided by the Norwegian Storting (Parliament of Norway).

Designating Norway as awarders of the signature peace prize turned out to be a controversial decision. The country was, at the time, under Swedish sovereignty, although a burgeoning secessionist movement would

MAKING THE PRIZES REALITY

ALFRED NOBEL may have provided the money, but Ragnar Sohlman made the Nobel Prizes a reality. A chemical engineer by trade, he was co-executor of Nobel's estate. He secured Nobel's assets and collaborated with the prize-awarding institutions. Between 1929 and 1946 he presided over the Nobel Foundation and helped make the awards a worldwide phenomenon.

RAGNAR SOHLMAN IN OLD AGE

TT NEWS/CORDON PRESS

FIRST PRIZES GO TO...

IN 1901, Jean-Henri Dunant, founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Frédéric Passy, founder of the first French peace society, won the inaugural peace prize. The first women to win were Marie Curie, co-recipient of the physics prize in 1903, and Bertha von Suttner, awarded the peace prize in 1905.

A NOBEL PRIZE MEDAL, WITH THE VISAGE OF ITS FOUNDER
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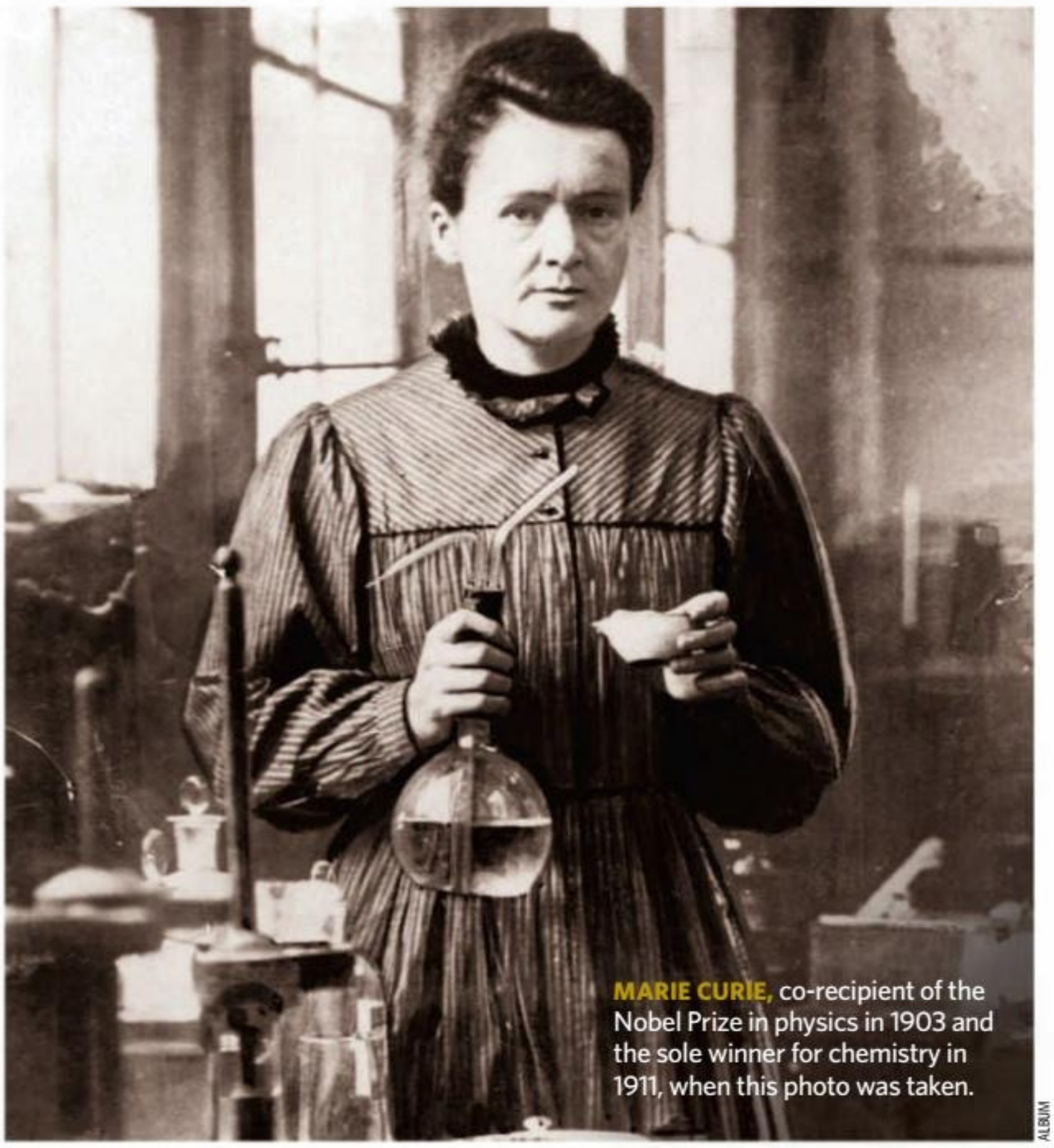


MARIE CURIE, co-recipient of the Nobel Prize in physics in 1903 and the sole winner for chemistry in 1911, when this photo was taken.

ALBUM

eventually achieve Norwegian independence in 1905. This, and other factors, clouded Nobel's scheme in controversy. King Oscar II of Sweden considered the prizes an extravagance that would mean large sums of money leaving his country every year.

Nobel's relatives, who had been all but disinherited, were also unhappy. They certainly didn't have any financial difficulties themselves—among other businesses, they owned lucrative oil wells in the Caucasus—but as Alfred's businesses were closely linked with those of his relatives, they could legitimately claim that the liquidation of the deceased's assets did jeopardize them. These objections and pressures could have easily scuppered Nobel's honorable, but complex, bequest. If just one of the institutions designated by Nobel had declined the unsought honor, for instance, the whole project could have been undermined. Neither the will nor any of the accompanying documents specified how the new foundation should be set up or how the money should be managed.

In the end, Nobel's vision became reality thanks to Ragnar Sohlman, a young engineer whom he commissioned in his will to set up the Nobel Foundation. Along with his colleague, Rudolf Lilljequist, Sohlman traveled widely to locate and secure Nobel's assets in the name of the bequest—shares, bonds, cash, and documents—and, bit by bit, move them to Sweden before they could be blocked. Sohlman was particularly concerned that the French authorities might try to stop the funds from leaving the country, so he packed up boxes with the documents and sent them to Sweden as registered post to make sure they were secure.

In 1901, after five years of planning, the first Nobel Prizes were awarded. Since then, the impact of the awards has been colossal. Every fall, the decisions are eagerly awaited, intensely analyzed, and applauded or savaged.

The Nobel Peace Prize has often courted particular controversy. Among the nominees for the prize in 1939, for example, was Adolf Hitler—in the end, because of the outbreak of the Second World War, no prize was awarded that year. Other winners—such as Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, and Nelson Mandela—were largely hailed. They, and recipients of the other Nobel Prizes, conformed to the lofty intention that the prizes be awarded to: "Those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind."

—Juan José Sánchez Arreseigor

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* Comes to Life

Combining science and the supernatural, Mary Shelley conceived the world's first science fiction novel at the tender age of 19 during a rainy summer holiday. *Frankenstein* took on a life of its own, becoming a cultural phenomenon that treads the boundary between life and death.

Born on a dark and stormy night, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* is a true masterpiece of terror that began as a fireside ghost story and turned into a worldwide phenomenon. Its teenage author, the future Mary Shelley, drew upon her nightmares to come up with a story as challenging as it is chilling.

The story took shape during the year without a summer, as 1816 came to be known. The 1815 eruption of the Mount Tambora volcano on the island of Sumbawa (part of modern-day Indonesia) had released vast amounts ash, rock, and sulfuric dust into the air, which dramatically lowered temperatures across many areas of the globe the following year. Reports of odd weather came in from all quarters in 1816: summer frosts in North America, red snow in Italy, and eight weeks of nonstop rain in Ireland.

The bizarre weather in 1816 also left an indelible mark on culture and literature. That year, a group of friends from England had been looking forward to spending the summer months together in a large house, Villa Diodati near Lake Geneva. The group included the poet Lord Byron, his personal physician John Polidori, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Shelley's teenage lover, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin.

MEETING HIS MAKER
The monster, played by Boris Karloff (right) in a tense encounter with his inventor in the 1931 movie *Frankenstein,* based on Mary Shelley's 1818 novel

JOHN KOBAL FOUNDATION/GETTY IMAGES

CURIOUS AND CULTURED

BORN in London on August 30, 1797, Mary was the daughter of two brilliant parents, whose thinking helped shape progressive ideas in the 19th century. Her father was the radical thinker William Godwin. Her mother, the feminist pioneer Mary Wollstonecraft, died shortly after giving birth. As a young girl Mary attended literary and philosophical soirees held by her father, which is where in 1812 she met her future husband, Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was strongly attracted to her intellectual curiosity.

MARY SHELLEY BY R. ROTHWELL, 1840. NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

PRISMA/ALBUM

Mary had met the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in Britain in 1812. Mary was in her mid-teens, and Shelley was a married man and father of two children. The two fell in love, and in 1814, facing opposition to their relationship from Mary's father, the couple eloped to Europe. They would marry in 1818, after the suicide of Shelley's first wife.

From Nightmare to Novel

The outdoor activities they had been eagerly anticipating were washed out by the constant torrential cloudbursts in Switzerland that year. "It proved a wet, ungenial summer," Mary wrote years later, "and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house."

The group were all advocates of Romanticism, a movement that originated in the late 18th century in response to the dispassionate reason of the Enlightenment. Romantics favored nature, passion, and the experience of the individual.

To pass the time indoors, the party held stirring discussions of current scientific theories. They were particularly fascinated by the experiments with electricity carried out the century before by Luigi Galvani, who had observed how an electric current made the legs of dead frogs twitch. They speculated on the possibility of bringing dead matter back to life by using electrical impulses. Mary later recalled: "Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth."

After all this scientific talk, Lord Byron took the group in a different direction and suggested that each member of the party write a horror story. Out of this parlor game came a new kind of tale, Mary Shelley's terrifying novel, *Frankenstein*.

Mary, then age 18, had little writing experience. A sensitive, highly cultured woman whose mother had died when she was a baby, her frequent bouts of depression fueled a morbid fascination with death. In later years she would recall how, during that Swiss summer holiday, she experienced a nightmarish vision with "a

To her husband, poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary was a "child of love and light."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY PORTRAIT BY A. CURRAN, 1819
AKG/ALBUM

HOUSE OF HORRORS
The Villa Diodati, near Lake Geneva, Switzerland, where Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was conceived in the unsettled summer of 1816. Engraving by William Purser

DEA/ALBUM

vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie." She described it: "I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life and stir with an uneasy half-vital motion."

In response to Byron's ghost-story game, Mary turned her nightmare into a yarn about a scientist who creates a monstrous creature. Later, back in Britain, she expanded this initial tale into a novel. "At first I thought but of a few pages, of a short tale," she wrote later, "but Shelley [by then her husband] urged me to develop the idea at greater length." Published anonymously at first in 1818, she titled the work *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*. Her name appeared on the second edition in 1823. In 1831 she republished the work, changing some of its more radical passages, adding a preface containing a tribute to Shelley's late husband, who drowned in 1822. It is the version that is best known today.

GRUESOME TWOSOME

A VAMPIRE AND FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER first teamed up to scare people in 1816. On the same night that Mary Shelley dreamed up Frankenstein, fellow houseguest Dr. Polidori spun his own scary story, which he later published in 1819 as *The Vampyre*, a clear precursor to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

ENGRAVING FROM THE 1831 EDITION OF *FRANKENSTEIN*

MARY EVANS PICTURE/AGE FOTOSTOCK

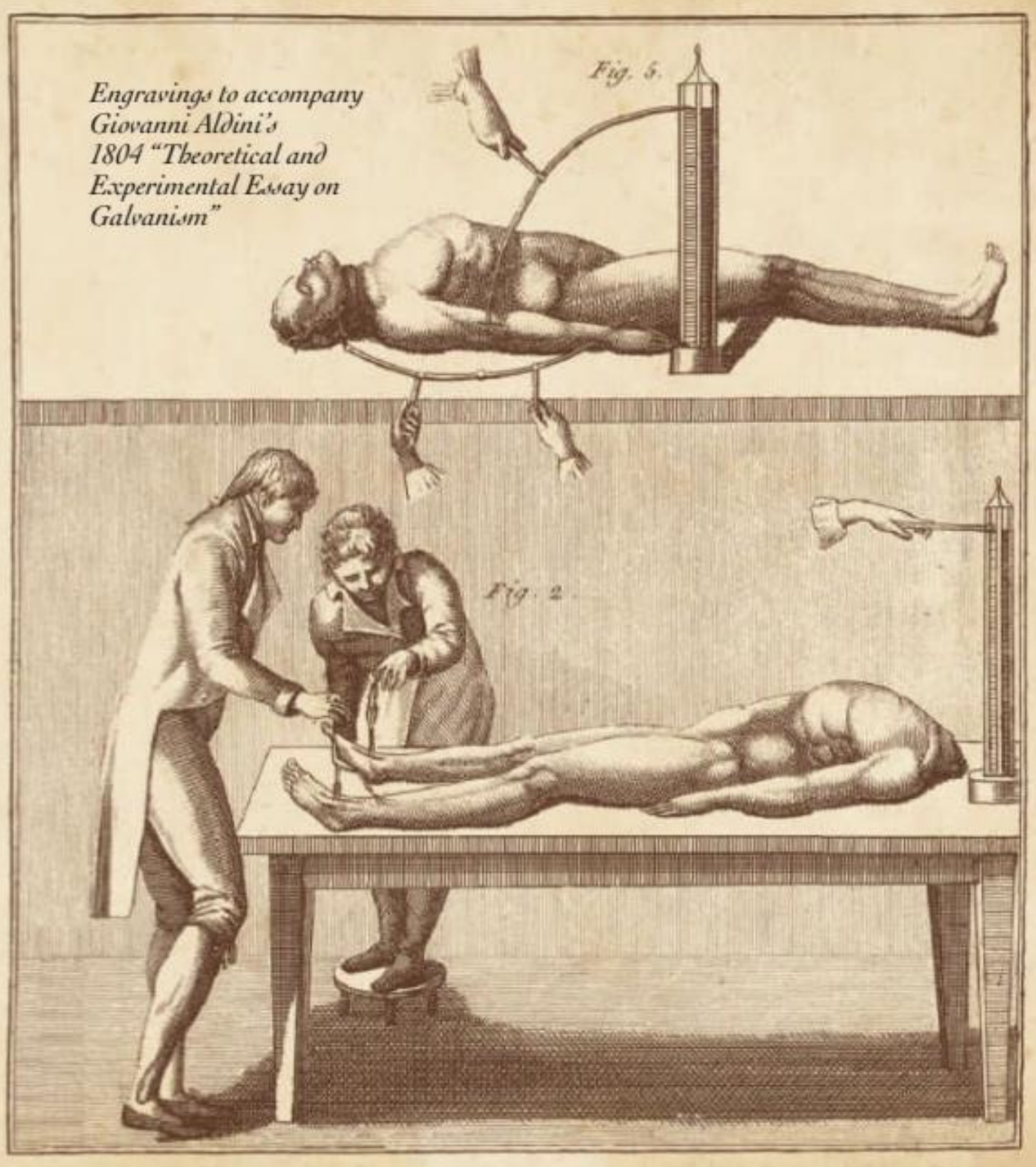
Making a Monster

Mary Shelley's novel tells the story of a Swiss scientist, Dr. Victor Frankenstein. He attends the lectures of a professor at the University of Ingolstadt, in Bavaria, where he is fascinated to learn about the latest advances in science and resolves to "pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation."

Frankenstein sets to work, feverishly studying anatomy and the processes

The Shocking Truth That Fed Fiction

IN THE 1770S THE ITALIAN scientist Luigi Galvani conducted experiments that caused muscle convulsions in dead frogs through electrical charges. Galvanist experiments became popular across Europe thanks to Giovanni Aldini, Galvani's nephew and disciple. In 1803 Aldini carried out a spectacular demonstration of the technique on the body of an executed criminal in London. Describing the effects of the electrical stimulus, one chronicler reported how "the left eye actually opened." Galvanism directly influenced Mary Shelley's fictional creation, and the verb "galvanize"—to stimulate to action—soon passed into the English language.



Engravings to accompany Giovanni Aldini's 1804 "Theoretical and Experimental Essay on Galvanism"

WELLCOME IMAGES/SCIENCE SOURCE

whereby human tissue is generated and corrupted. Then one day in a sudden flash of inspiration, he believes he has discovered "the cause of generation and life" and become "capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter."

Frankenstein carries out mysterious experiments and constructs a titanic, hulking body. "I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet." The creature comes to life, and Frankenstein is horrified by what he has unleashed. A tragic chain of events is set into motion, and by the end of the tale, everything Frankenstein loves has been destroyed by his creation.

Frankenstein reflects the deeply felt concerns of an age conflicted over religion and science. The novel explores the boundary between life and death, and the potential dangers human arrogance might arouse when trying to "play God."

The fact that these big questions still inform the social implications of science in the 21st century is a key reason that the popularity of Mary Shelley's story has only grown over time. Since its first publication, the book has never been out of print. Stage productions of the story followed as early as 1822. In the 20th century dozens of films told and retold the Frankenstein story. The most iconic version was produced by Universal Pictures in 1931 and starred Boris Karloff in what became his signature role.

Curse of Frankenstein

Despite her literary successes, personal tragedy overshadowed much of Mary Shelley's life. She lost her husband in 1822. She suffered several miscarriages, and only one of her children survived to adulthood.

In her later years, widowed and careworn, Mary Shelley became notably less radical in her philosophy than when she had written *Frankenstein* as a teen. Revising the work for the 1831 edition, she made significant changes to the underlying ideas of the plot. In the first version Dr. Frankenstein makes the creature in the spirit of free, scientific curiosity; his sin is that he then refuses to love and nurture him once he comes to life. The later edition portrays Dr. Frankenstein as a victim of fate; much of the science behind the creation of the creature comes about through chance.

In some ways the very work itself seems to have become Mary Shelley's own "creature": the product of youthful ideas that in later life were replaced with more conventional notions of the forces of fate. As she wrote in a letter in 1827: "The power of Destiny I feel . . . pressing more and more on me, and I yield myself a slave to it."

—María Pilar Queralt

Nativism and the Know-Nothings

Founded in fear and prejudice, the Know-Nothing Party railed against immigrants and Catholics during its short political life in the United States in the mid-19th century.

GRANGER/ALBUM

MILLARD FILLMORE, AMERICAN PARTY CANDIDATE IN 1856, SERVED AS 13TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (1850-53).

The United States has long conceived of itself as a haven for immigrants, a place welcoming of any person, no matter their origin, to begin a new life as an American. Flying in the face of this ideal, an ugly strain of nativism runs throughout American history with anti-immigrant movements rearing up in the 1790s, 1870s, and 1920s.

Perhaps the most well-known nativist movement arose in the decades before the Civil War. The American Party, better known as the Know-Nothings, was a reflection of the troubled times confronting the young United States. The nation faced growing conflict over slavery and westward expansion, which led to dissent within the two major political parties, the Democrats and the Whigs.

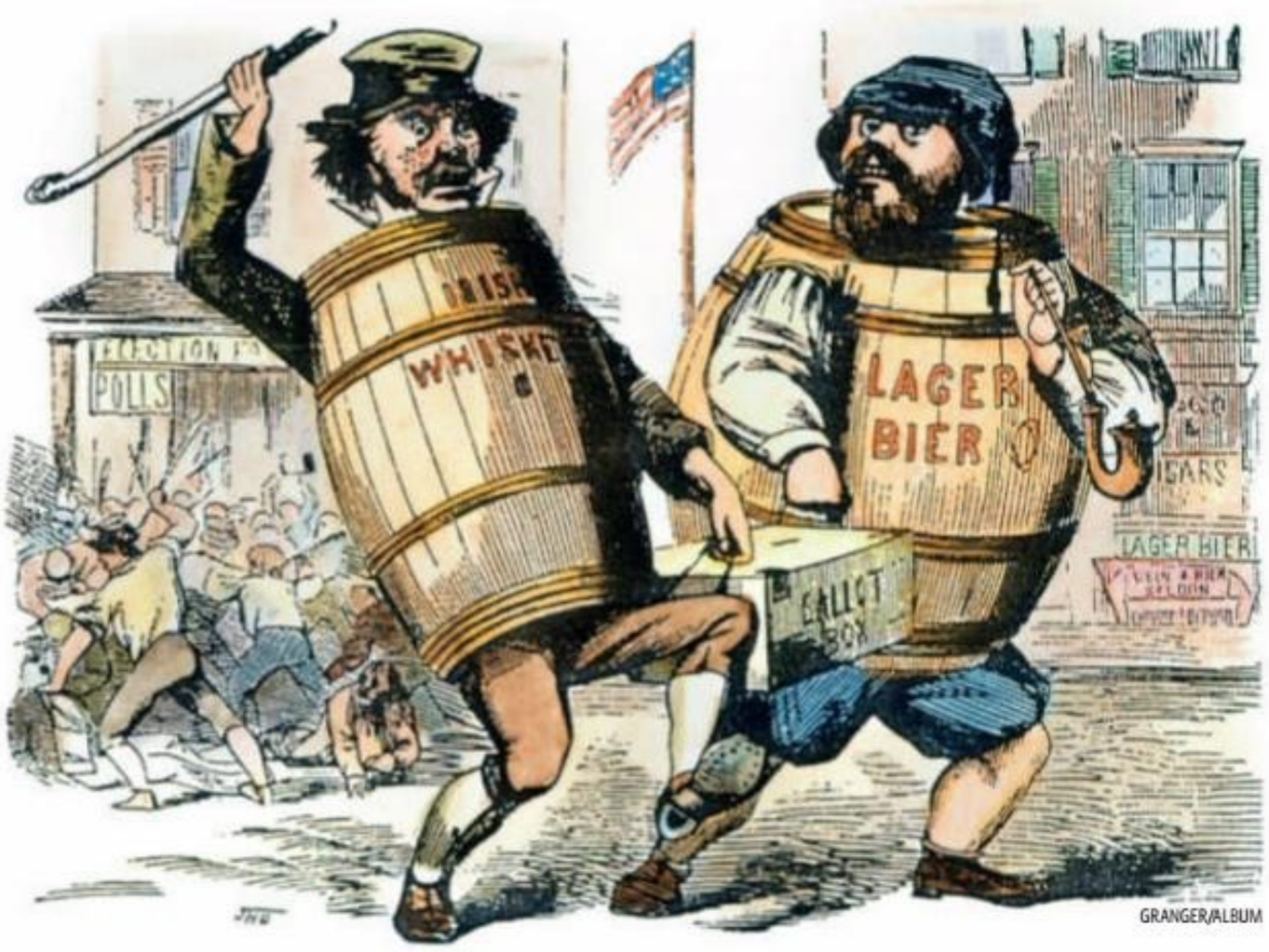
In the 1830s and '40s increasing numbers of immigrants, mostly Irish in the East and Germans in the Midwest, were settling in the United States. The Irish Potato Famine and economic instability in Germany led to an influx of nearly three million people, a great number of whom were Catholic. Native-born Protestants, mostly in urban areas, felt threatened by the new arrivals. To many Protestants, the Catholic Church represented tyranny and subjugation to a foreign power. Competition for jobs increased. As anti-immigrant and anti–Roman Catholic feelings arose, nativist groups began to form in cities across the United States.

Many of these organizations played on fears that foreigners were gaining undue political influence because of the efforts of unscrupulous politicians to woo them and "steal" elections. Nativists often played on stereotypes depicting Irish and Germans as immoral drunkards and often blamed them for social ills, such as rising crime and poverty rates. Tensions sometimes ignited violence, with nativist riots breaking out during the 1840s and '50s in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Louisville.

Rapid Rise, Fast Fall

In 1849 a secret society named the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner was organized in New York City. Members employed a cloak-and-dagger approach to their political activities; when asked about their organizations, members gave the canned answer: "I know nothing." Outsiders used this response as a nickname, which stuck. As the Know-Nothings' membership grew, they would shed their clandestine nature and eventually become the American Party in the 1850s.

Party members tended to come from the working classes and had a strong anti-elitist bent. Their platform sought to limit immigration and the influence of Catholicism. Under their plan, residency



GRANGER/ALBUM

AN IRISHMAN AND A GERMAN ENCASED IN A BARREL OF WHISKEY AND BEER REPRESENT A NATIONAL THREAT AS THEY STEAL A BALLOT BOX IN THIS NATIVIST CARTOON FROM 1850.

PHILADELPHIA'S SUMMER OF BLOOD

IN MAY AND JULY 1844 anti-immigrant violence rocked the City of Brotherly Love. Originating over whether Catholic children should sing Protestant hymns at school, riots exploded after nativists demonstrated against Catholics in an Irish Catholic neighborhood on May 6. The first riot lasted four days during which two Catholic churches burned and at least 14 people died. Then in July, violence erupted around a Catholic church being protected by the state militia. Nativist rioters pelted them with rocks and bottles, and the militia opened fire. After the smoke cleared hours later, some 15 to 20 people lay dead.

THIS LITHOGRAPH SHOWS HOW CLOSE THE NATIVISTS (IN TALL BEAVER HATS) WERE TO THE STATE MILITIA DURING THE JULY 1844 RIOT.

GRANGER/ALBUM

requirements would increase from five to 21 years before one could become a citizen. People born on foreign soil would not be able to vote or hold public office.

On a local level, the Know-Nothings had a large amount of success in a short time, electing mayors and state representatives in the late 1840s and early 1850s. After elections in 1854, they held 43 seats in the U.S. Congress. Much of this early success was due to the demise of the Whig Party, weakened by internal dissent over national issues like slavery. Some former Whigs defected to the Know-Nothings while others joined a new party, the antislavery Republicans.

Before 1855, the Know-Nothings had no centralized organization. Encouraged by their successes, they formally organized in 1855 as the American Party, after which they went into a rapid decline. The elections of 1856 were a disaster for their candidates. Their nominee for the presidency, former Whig and president Millard Fillmore, came in a distant third behind the Republicans and the victorious Democrats. The Know-Nothings lost more than 30 seats in Congress. Whatever power they had gained in the early 1850s was gone for good.

Winning elections on a national level proved more difficult for the Know-Nothings because of the complexity of the country's problems. Until 1856, the Know-Nothings had largely been a local movement focused on a single issue. The move to the national stage revealed the fragility of their political alliances, and they tore themselves apart. After 1856, the Republicans would be the party to emerge from the political chaos of the mid-19th century. They would survive the challenges of a nation divided over the question of slavery.

—Amy E. Briggs

1286

Making Spectacles

Thirteenth-century advances in the understanding of sight, combined with improvements in glassmaking, led to the invention of the first modern pair of eyeglasses.

ON SPEC A REPLICA OF THE OLDEST SURVIVING SPECTACLES (CA 1400). MUSEUM OF WIENHAUSEN, GERMANY

AKG/ALBUM

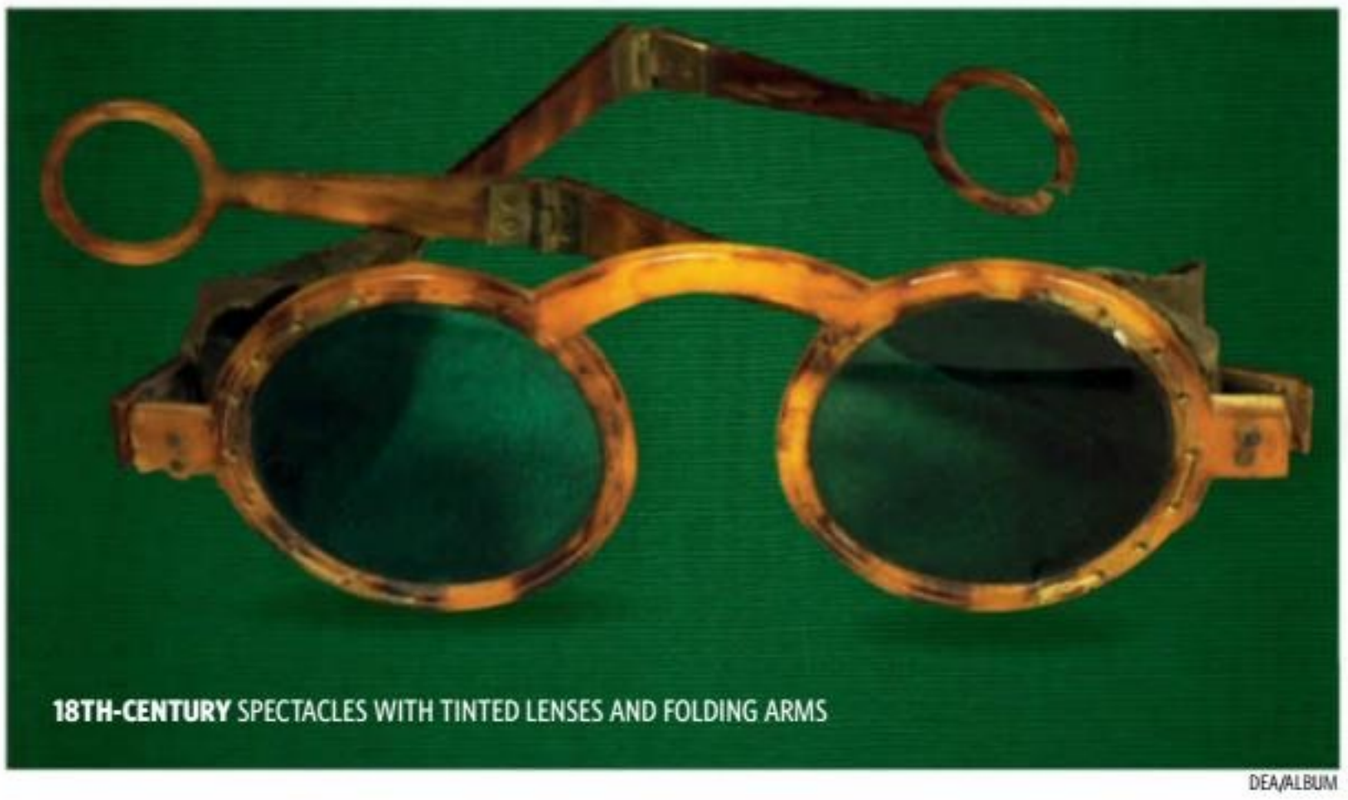
Centuries ago, people with poor eyesight had few options to improve their everyday vision. Operations on the eye were recorded as early as 1950 B.C., but less invasive solutions were more elusive. It wouldn't be until humanity increased its understanding of biology that something as simple as eyeglasses could be invented.

Reading Stones

"Reading stones"—thick, semispherical pieces of glass—had been in use for centuries to magnify text, but it wasn't until the 11th century A.D. that scientists would understand the mechanics behind it. Born in Basra (in modern-day Iraq), Ibn al-Haytham, known in the West as Alhazen, expanded medical understanding of the human cornea in his great 11th-century work, *Book of Optics*. He correctly described the function of the eye, how it refracts light rays, and how artificial lenses might be used to enhance sight.

After Alhazen's works were translated into Latin in the 13th century, monks took great interest in his findings. Eyestrain was an occupational hazard for them due to their work of reading and copying manuscripts. The English Franciscan scholar Roger Bacon was inspired by Alhazen's writings. Bacon's research contains the earliest Western records of using artificial lenses to improve vision.

Armed with Alhazen and Bacon's theories as to how such early lenses actually worked, European inventors got to work. The exact date and identity of the European inventor of glasses is uncertain. Alessandro di Spina of Florence is often credited with the innovation. One source, Dominican friar Giordano da Rivalto, preaching in Florence in 1306, said: "It is not yet 20 years since there was found the art of making eyeglasses, which make for good vision." He went on to claim he knew a monk "who first discovered and practiced it." This account places the invention to around 1286.



18TH-CENTURY SPECTACLES WITH TINTED LENSES AND FOLDING ARMS

DEA/ALBUM

Early Speculation

The earliest spectacles were made of wood or horn and joined by a rivet. Lenses were typically made of a mix of sand, potassium, and sodium carbonate combined in a glassmaking technique at which the Venetians excelled. The frames would then perch on the nose or be held up to the face.

These early glasses primarily corrected the blurriness caused by an age-related condition, presbyopia. In the 1360s the poet Petrarch recounts how at age 60, he was "obliged to rely on the help of lenses."

EARLY VISION
A saint dons spectacles in a detail from a 1403 altarpiece by Konrad von Soest in Bad Wildungen, Germany.

AKG/ALBUM

In time glasses started to correct other visual impairments. The work of Nicholas of Cusa in the mid-1400s suggests that the insight that concave lenses correct nearsightedness, and convex, farsightedness, was already becoming known. There is, however, some debate about precisely when these conditions were medically described.

By the 1500s eyeglasses were a part of life. They began appearing in paintings and portraits, including depictions of saints, to symbolize scholarly traits. For instance, one 15th-century Italian painting features eyeglasses among the objects at St. Jerome's desk.

Glasses were often tied to the head with a cord. The use of side arms, first resting on the temples and later (as now) over the ears, became popular in the early 1700s. Benjamin Franklin is credited with the invention of bifocals later that century. Thanks to industrial production in the 1800s, eyeglasses vastly improved and became more widely available.

—Alfonso López

A GERMAN SPECTACLEMAKER'S SHOP. WOOD ENGRAVING, 1568

AKG/ALBUM

SCIENCE, ART, AND CRAFT

Circa 1040
Arab scholar Alhazen—author of the *Book of Optics*, a work that will later revolutionize European science—dies.

1200s
The *Book of Optics* is translated into Latin as *De aspectibus*, and inspires the optics research of Oxford scholar Roger Bacon.

1286
A monk in Pisa creates the first eyeglasses around this date, according to Giordano da Rivalto, who mentions the invention in a sermon in 1306.

1352
A fresco in a basilica in Treviso near Venice is the first depiction of a person wearing glasses.

1458
A treatise by Nicholas of Cusa suggests that the different effects of convex and concave lenses are now known.

1700s
Eyeglasses with arms become popular, and modern glasses are born.

CARDINAL WEARING GLASSES. OIL PAINTING BY EL GRECO, 1598

ORONOZ/ALBUM

The Cave of Altamira

STONE AGE SENSATION

Discovered in the late 19th century, the colorful Paleolithic art of the Altamira Cave in Spain shocked a world unprepared for the artistic sophistication of early humans' vibrant creations.

JOSÉ ANTONIO LASHERAS

RAISING THE ROOF

Visitors to Altamira, in northern Spain, admire the replica of the polychrome ceiling. Entry to the cave itself, adorned with paintings and engravings created during the time period between 35,000 and 14,000 years ago, is strictly limited to preserve its delicate Paleolithic artworks.

TINO SORIANO/NGS

A FERTILE HISTORY

Located near Santillana del Mar (left) on Spain's verdant northern coast, Altamira's much colder, prehistoric landscape was populated by bison.

DAVID R. FRAZIER/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola, a Spanish landowner and amateur archaeologist, was fascinated by what he saw at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1878. The prehistoric artifacts on display dominated his thoughts upon his return to his country estate near the medieval city of Santillana del Mar near Spain's northern coast. Sautuola started to think more and more about some bone fragments he had seen in a local cave a few years before. Could they have been prehistoric as well?

Sautuola and his young daughter, María , visited the cave of Altamira the summer after his Paris visit. Holding a lantern, the little girl explored some passages on her own. When he heard her call out in astonishment, Sautuola rushed to his daughter's side. As they peered up to where her light cast its glow, father and daughter saw vivid paintings of animals covering the entire roof of the grotto.

María had found scores of drawings in one side chamber in Altamira's more than 880-foot-long complex of passages. Further exploration of the cave yielded more rooms decorated with paintings of bison, horses, deer, and many other animals. Today archaeologists have established that the bulk of the artwork in the cave is between 14,000 to 17,000 years old. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1985, Altamira also contains some of the earliest Stone Age painting ever found, dating back more than 35,000 years. But the initial discovery was met with skepticism, and it would take years before the world accepted the marvel that is Altamira.

Scholars and Skeptics

From the moment of his discovery, Sautuola was convinced the artwork was ancient, but his joy was short-lived. The Ninth International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology Congress held in 1880 in Lisbon, Portugal, examined his findings in the cave. Led by French archaeologist Émile Cartailhac, the delegates dismissed any notion that this art could possibly be Paleolithic.

The skepticism of the academics was perhaps not surprising. Paintings of this age and this quality had never been seen before. If they were genuine, they would present a major challenge to existing assumptions about prehistoric people. Altamira's cave art employs a wide range of artistic techniques believed to be too complex for the Paleolithic era. The use of perspective, creation of pigments using water or fat mixtures, and use of a paintbrush-like tool seemed too

PRESENT

5

Artists in the Upper Paleolithic

DUBBED THE "Sistine Chapel of Quaternary Art" by the archaeologist Joseph Déchelette in 1908, the polychrome ceiling is the most famous of Altamira's art. It is here that the oldest painting in the complex is located, believed to be more than 35,000 years old. Since then, artists from different cultures of the Upper Paleolithic period were represented in its chambers.

BISON ▲
REINDEER-HORN CARVING FROM THE MADELEINE CAVE IN THE ARDÈCHE GORGES, FRANCE, MADE AROUND 14,000 YEARS AGO. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PREHISTORY, LES EYZIES-DE-TAYAC
ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

13,500 YA
Cave entrance collapses

MAGDALENIAN

5
4

17,000 YA

SOLUTREAN

20,000 YA

GRAVETTIAN

25,000 YA

3

AURIGNACIAN

LION MAN ▶
MAMMOTH-IVORY CARVING FROM THE CAVE OF HOHLENSTEIN-STADEL, GERMANY, MADE AROUND 40,000 YEARS AGO. ULM MUSEUM, BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG
FINE ART/AGE FOTOSTOCK

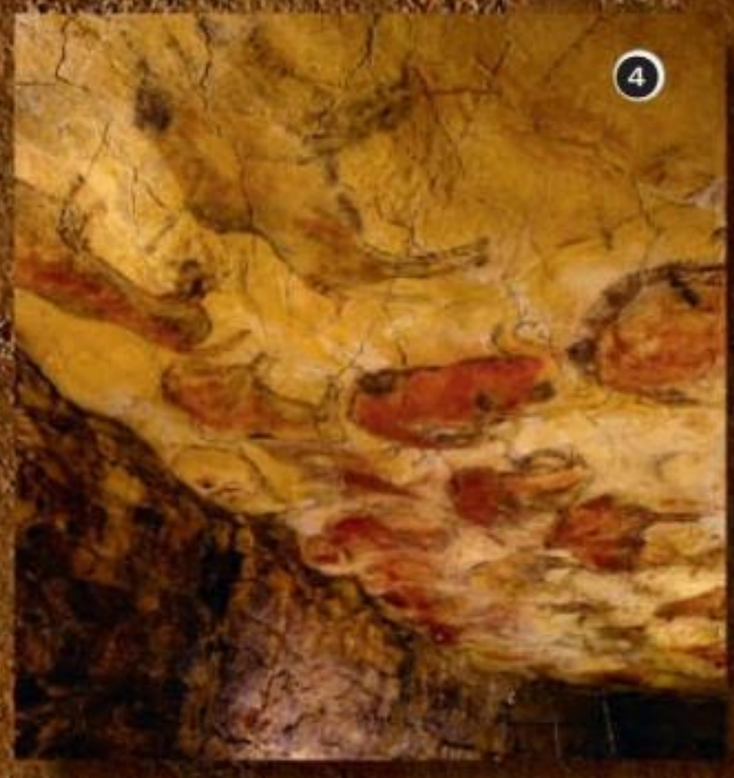
2

2

1

35,000+ YA
Altamira's oldest painting

40,000 YEARS AGO (YA)



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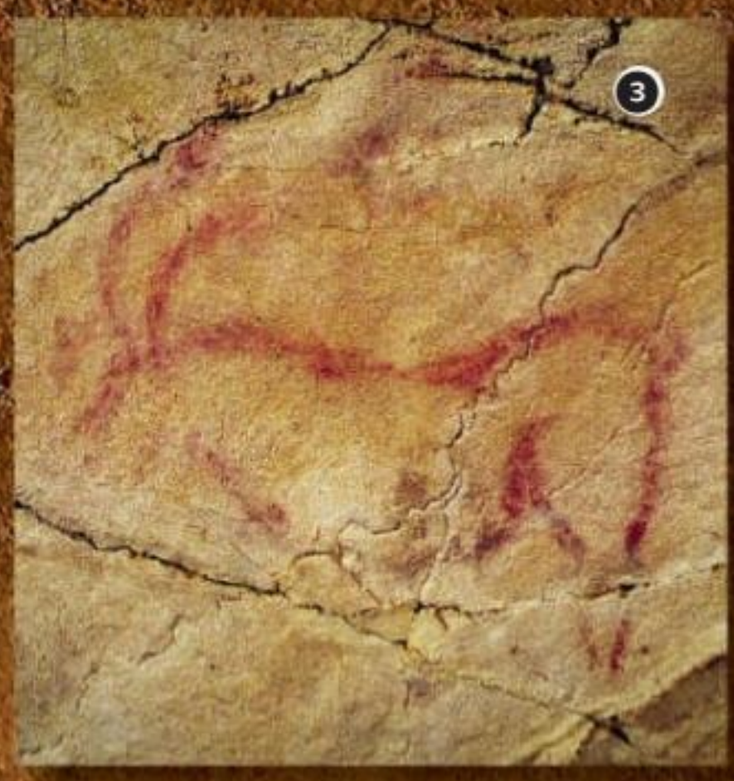
PEDRO SAURA

Red and black bison. The extraordinarily naturalistic representation of bison on the polychrome ceiling dates to the Magdalenian.



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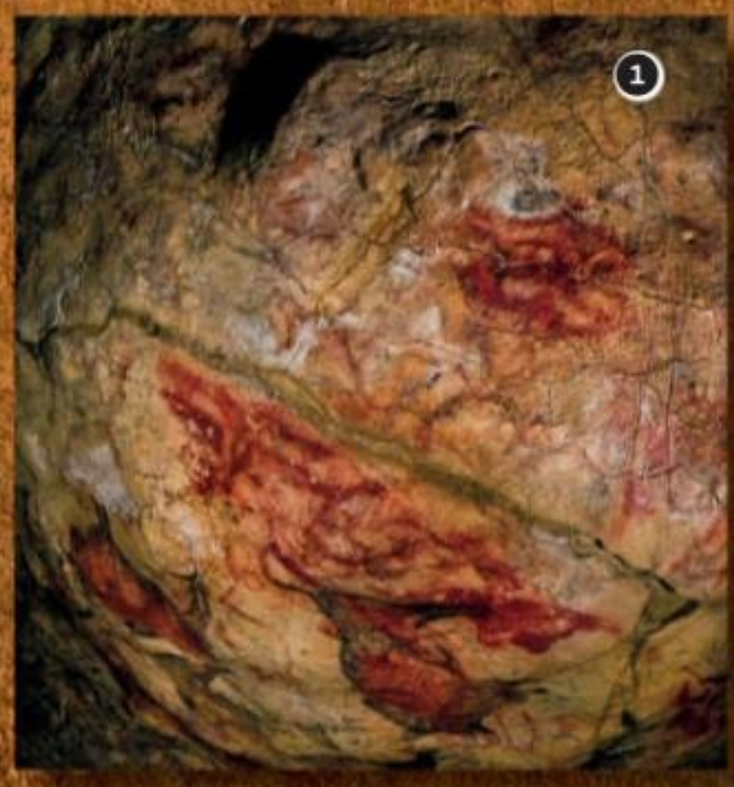
PEDRO SAURA

Mountain goat, with large horns and erect tail, painted on the vault of the polychrome ceiling some 25,000 years ago



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PEDRO SAURA

Believed to be more than 35,000 years old, the symbols in the upper half of this image predate the bison images by 20,000 years.

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A NEANDERTHAL?

IF 19TH-CENTURY society struggled to accept the idea that human works of art could be much older than previously thought, modern minds are grappling with another question: Could the earliest cave art be created by someone other than *Homo sapiens*? Studies carried out in 2012 discovered that some cave art in Spain is older than Altamira's—in some cases, 40,800 years old. Their age raises the possibility that the oldest paintings may be the work of Neanderthals, who were present in Europe before dying out about 40,000 years ago. Neanderthals created art in the form of beads—so why not painting? Skeptics argue that Neanderthals had existed for 300,000 years before that date without leaving any evidence of painting, suggesting that the visual art found to date is more likely to be the work of early humans.

P. PLAILLY-E. DAYNES/SPL/AGE FOTOSTOCK

advanced for those believed to be a crude people.

Above all, the scholars were struck by how the paintings seemed vivid and fresh; they seemed too pristine, untainted by grease or soot. The French engineer and historian Édouard Harlé was sent to Altamira at the behest of the delegates to tour the cave with Sautuola himself. In 1881 Harlé too denied the authenticity of the paintings in his published report.

Bitterly disappointed by the skepticism of the archaeologists, Sautuola endured more humiliation when it was suggested that he had hired a local artist to create an elaborate hoax. Some scholars went so far as to suspect that the Altamira paintings were a coordinated stunt staged by Spanish Jesuits to discredit archaeologists. Between 1890 and 1901, more discoveries of cave art in Europe began casting doubt on the scholars' attitudes. The caves of La Mouthe, Pair-non-Pair, Les Combarelles, Mas d'Azil, and Font-de-Gaume were discovered in France. These, too, contained prehistoric artworks. Were these all forgeries, too?

The skeptics' once concrete pronouncements now started to look shaky. The spate of other finds in Europe confirmed that there were people living well back into the last glacial period, like those at Altamira, who were capable of creating a vibrant body of artwork. New questions were raised about the cave at Altamira, and attitudes began to change. Cartailhac was later forced to accept the authenticity of the remarkable paintings in the Spanish cave. In 1902 he even published an article, "The Mea Culpa of a Skeptic," admitting his error in dismissing the Altamira creations and including a sincere apology to Sautuola.

MARCELINO BOTÍN FOUNDATION

María Sanz de Sautuola (left), was a small child when she accompanied her father into the cave of Altamira in 1879, drawing his attention to where the glow of her lantern fell on the painted ceiling. With the words "Look, Daddy, oxen!" the little girl became the first recorded person to see the Altamira bison since the cave was sealed by a rockfall, some 13,500 years before.

The Late Flowering of Early History

The French archaeologist Jacques Boucher de Perthes caused a stir in 1846 when he argued that the discovery of Ice Age tools proved that human communities had thrived long before 4004 B.C., the date then fixed by Christian orthodoxy as the creation of the Earth. A decade later, remains of Neanderthals were discovered, and in 1859, Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, followed by *The Descent of Man* in 1871. By the time Altamira was discovered in 1879, many scholars were accepting that human history was more ancient than had been previously believed. But many still balked at the notion that such distant "savages" were sufficiently refined to have produced art.

PEDRO SAURA

PEDRO SAURA

THE GERMAN PREHISTORIAN HUGO OBERMAIER EXAMINING THE POLYCHROME CEILING IN THE ALTAMIRA CAVE, IN 1925. IN THE CENTER, THE ORIGINAL LEVEL OF THE FLOOR CAN BE CLEARLY SEEN. IT HAS SINCE BEEN EXCAVATED AND LOWERED TO CREATE A MORE CONVENIENT SPACE TO VIEW THE PAINTINGS.

Altamira: Life, Art, and Ritual

Before its collapse some 13,500 years ago, the northern mouth of the cave was around 50 feet wide and 7 feet high. Just inside is a large vestibule measuring some 65 by 80 feet. For thousands of years the everyday life of the Altamira dwellers played out in this space, bathed in daylight but shielded from the elements. It seems that the areas farther inside the complex were used for drawing, painting, and etching as well as for celebrations and rites associated with these images.

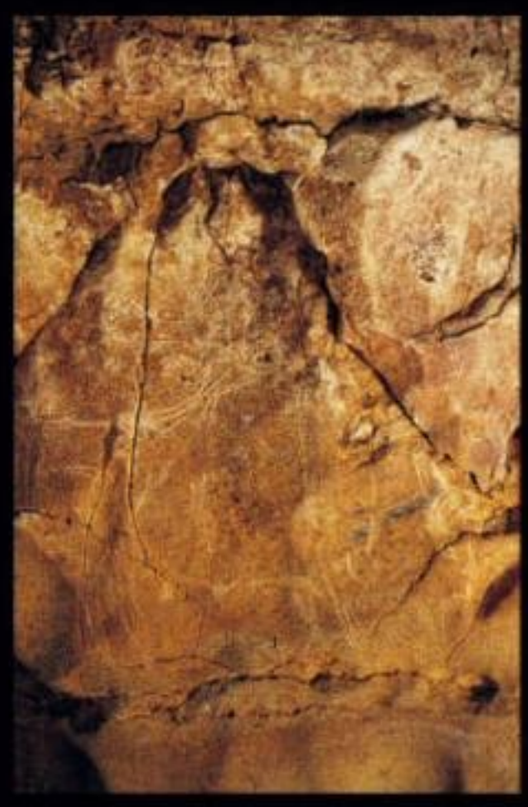
THE PIT
Among the various animals depicted in this space is a three-foot-long male bison, displaying its genitalia (right). All the figures in the rear part of the cave are rendered in black, using plant-based charcoal.

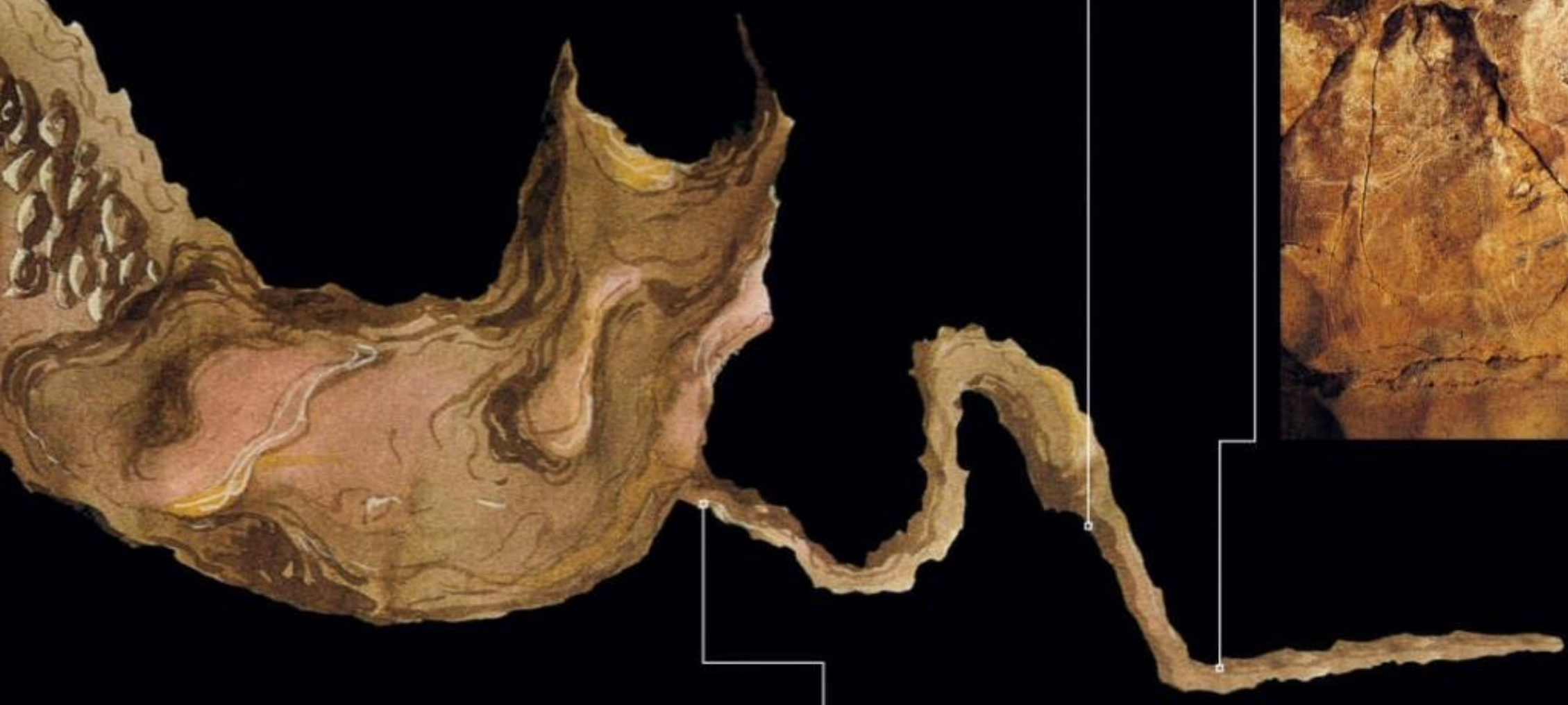
THE POLYCHROME CEILING
Of the huge array of forms, painted over thousands of years, 25 large figures predominate on Altamira's main ceiling (above), most of them bison, measuring between four and five and a half feet long. The figures were created by carving an outline, going over it with black, and then filling in the figure with red.

ENTRANCE

BLACK SIGNS
Tectiform—roof-shaped—symbols found at Altamira and other caves are often interpreted in different ways. The German scholar Hugo Obermaier saw them as traps for spirits or animals, while the French scholar André Leroi-Gourhan suggested they represented female genitalia.

ETCHED ANIMALS
On the walls and ceiling of the final Horse's Tail passageway are etchings of deer, bison (below), horses, masks (some with a human aspect), and various symbols. Some figures are enhanced with black charcoal to give them added dimension.





THE HORSE'S TAIL
Six feet high at the opening, the deepest tunnel of the Altamira complex becomes narrower and lower as it recedes. This place likely had special significance as reaching it would have required an enormous effort and may have meant passing through flooded sections of the cave, with barely enough space for artists to keep their heads—and their lamps—above water.

DIVERTICULUM
This tiny gallery (below), no more than three feet high, contains symbols consisting of parallel oval forms and tectiform symbols painted in red.

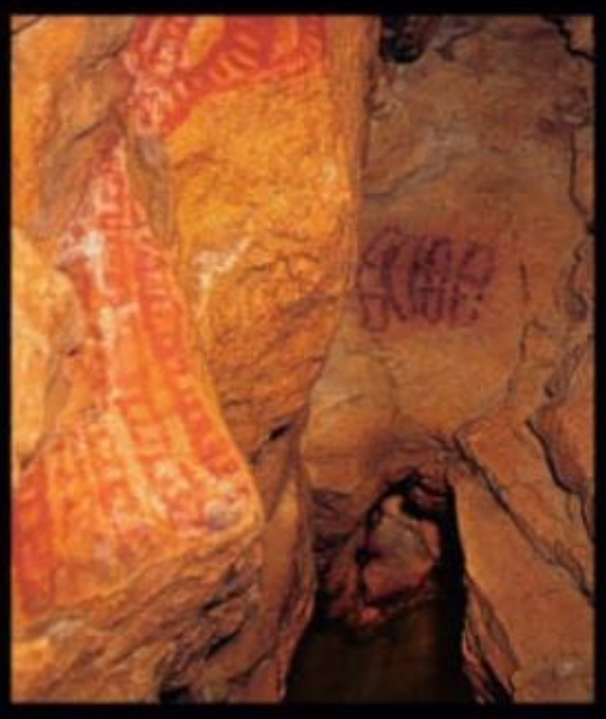
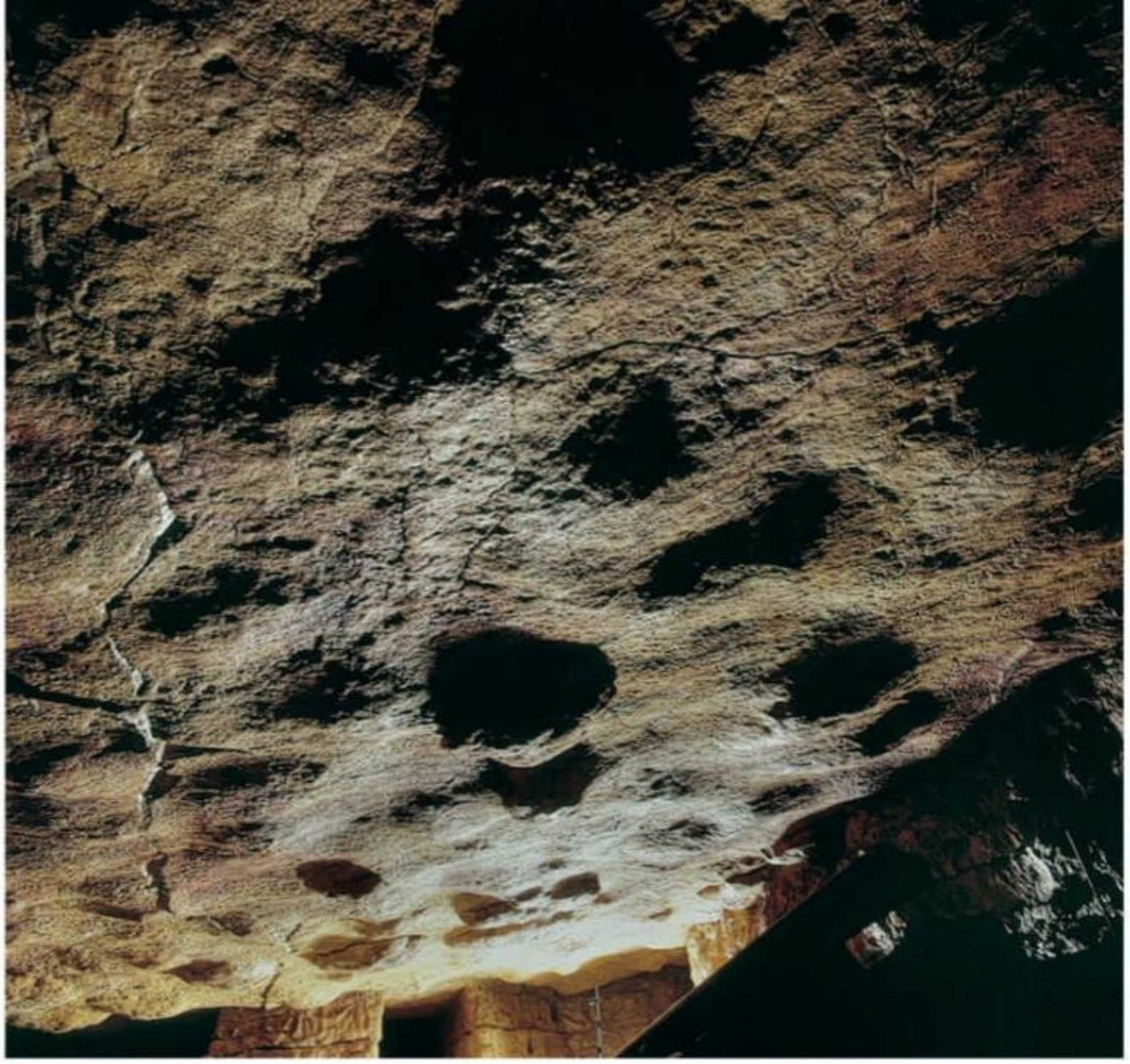


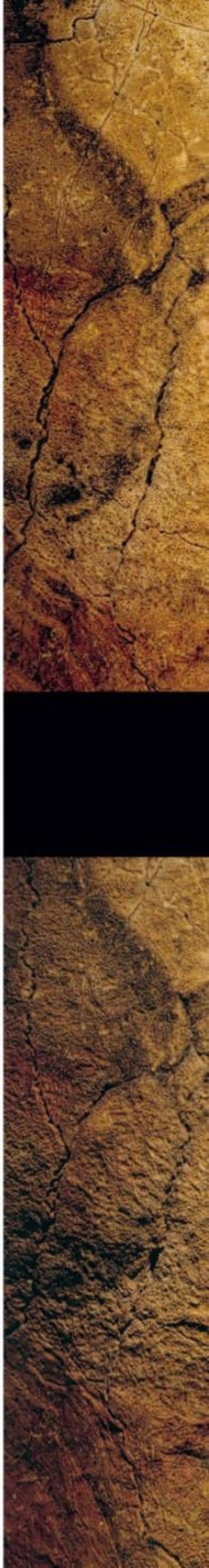
ILLUSTRATION AND PICTURES: PEDRO SAURA



NOW YOU SEE THEM . . .

Looking at the polychrome ceiling from a certain angle renders the paintings invisible. Only the rocky bulges, which provide volume to the paintings, are seen from these perspectives.

PEDRO SAURA



The Dawn of Painting

Perched on the edge of a hill, the entrance to the Cave of Altamira commands views over a green patchwork of farmland. Beyond it, a few miles away, lies the rocky Atlantic coast. But today's landscape would be almost unrecognizable to those who first inhabited, and later decorated, this remarkable cave.

The Upper Paleolithic period began around 40,000 years ago with the arrival of *Homo sapiens* in Europe, and ended around 10,000 years ago as the glaciers of the last ice age melted. Toward the end of this period, the climate in this part of northern Spain was much colder and wetter than it is now. Animals now extinct, such as mammoths and aurochs (similar to giant oxen) would have been a common sight, along with species now associated with more northern climes, such as reindeer and bison.

Clean water, abundant game, and sheltering caves created an environment suitable for a community of hunter-gatherers. Artifacts found near the Altamira entrance indicate that the cave was inhabited for long periods of the Upper Paleolithic period. The cave's proximity to the sea would have kept the temperatures warmer than farther inland, but winters would still have been harsh. Not only would the cave fulfill practical needs for shelter, storage, and warmth, it also would serve a more abstract purpose: a place for artistic expression. The people who wintered in the cave used its walls and ceilings to express their everyday hopes and fears through the paintings and drawings that they left behind.

The human drive to create dates back much further. German caves containing artifacts representative of Aurignacian culture (during the Upper Paleolithic period, about 40,000 to 10,000 years ago), contained animal figurines carved out of mammoth tusks and flutes made from bird bones. Archaeologists have found that humanity's earliest paintings were also being created during this time.

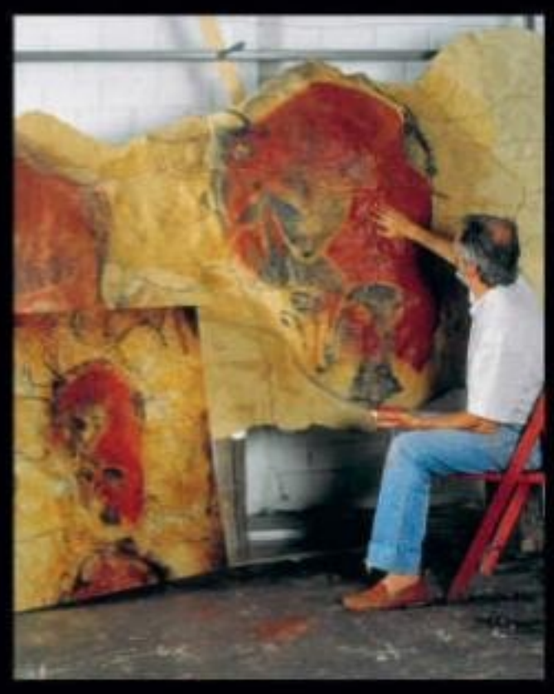
Over 35,000 years ago, someone entered the Altamira cave with a natural yellow-orange pigment (ocher) and water, and, using their fingers, traced various parallel curves on the main ceiling near the cave mouth. It is now believed that art found in other caves in the same region of Spain could date to more than 40,000 years ago. The earliest paintings found in the Chauvet Cave, discovered in France's Ardèche gorges in 1994, may date from a little later—around 33,000 to 32,000 years ago.

Tricks of the Light

Light played an important role in the creation and observation of the Altamira artworks. Sautuola wrote of the paintings: "In order to make them out you have to look from all points of view, especially if there is not much light . . . It's possible that even a person who knew they were there would not be able to make them out if they stood directly underneath." Even when seen in different lights, they look different . The top image shows the full range of coloring on a bison. The lower photograph of the same figure, taken with different lighting, reveals how the natural shadows of the rock formation bring a sense of dimension to the work. PICTURES: PEDRO SAURA

CONFLICTED CONSERVATION

SHARING THE WONDERS of the past while preserving them is a problem faced by custodians of archaeological sites the world over; Altamira is no exception. For many years the cave's artwork attracted lots of tourists: more than 170,000 in 1973 alone. In 1978, on the eve of the centenary of the cave art's discovery, the Spanish government studied the impact on the paintings; concerned for their welfare, it imposed a visitor cap in 1982. After Altamira became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985, research showed that destructive microorganisms were stimulated by artificial light. In 2001 a detailed replica of Altamira and its art was unveiled at the site, allowing visitors to get a sense of the paintings without damaging the originals. In recent years only five people a week, chosen by lottery, have been permitted to enter the real cave—but even these "low-impact" visits are still thought to pose a threat to these ancient artworks.



MODERN MEETS ANCIENT

Artists Pedro Saura (left) and Matilde Múzquiz crafted a replica of the polychrome ceiling in 2001, matching the methods used by the original Paleolithic painters, to create as close a likeness as possible.

PEDRO SAURA

A Tour Through Time

The ceiling that little María discovered lies near the cave entrance, where it is thought its prehistoric dwellers carried out their day-to-day life. A wide but low space, only about four feet from the floor, it is known today as the polychrome ceiling. The most famous pieces there are the distinctive red and black bison, which are in a few places touched with violet. Several of these animals were created using the natural undulations of the cave walls, incorporating their angles into the figure to give volume to all or part of the body.

Many of the bison were created in the Magdalenian period, between 15,000 to 13,000 years ago. The forms were created using black charcoal and red ocher, which would have been applied either like pastels or dissolved as pigment in water to form paint. In places, a line of bare rock has been left in order to separate and distinguish the legs from the body, thereby adding depth and volume to the figures.

The Magdalenian was the most intensively active artistic period at Altamira, and it included three main techniques: polychrome paintings such as the bison, all found in the front part of the cave complex; engravings, many of which represent deer; and black drawings made from charcoal. In addition to deer, bison, and horses, the number of species represented increased in this period to include goats. Humanlike faces were also created. Charcoal images started to extend beyond the ceiling and into the more remote galleries to the rear of the cave complex.

In some cases the Magdalenian artists painted over older artwork, especially on the main ceiling. These older representations include horses believed to have been created during the Gravettian and Solutrean periods—between 26,000 and 22,000 years ago. The depictions are flat and uniformly colored red, but extremely dynamic: Some of the horses are rearing up, and two appear to be males squaring off.

Many of the oldest artworks on the ceiling are representations of hands, reflecting a practice evident in other caves in Spain. Some are paintings of outstretched hands, and others were created by holding a hand against the rock face as paint was blown around it, creating an image in the negative space. Of all the stunning images at Altamira, it may be these symbols of human creativity that most movingly, and directly, bridge the millennia between this remote time and the human experience today.

The Altamiran Menagerie

Many of the animals painted on the polychrome ceiling were first outlined, then colored using black and red pigments. In other parts of the cave, some animals were etched directly onto the walls.

1. Two-tone horse
2. Black bison
3. Red horse and the head of a black bison
4. Two-tone bison
5. Two-tone bison
6. Two-tone pregnant deer
7. Bison running
8. Two-tone female bison
9. Head of a black bison
10. Two-tone bison
11. Engraved deer head

PICTURES: PEDRO SAURA

MYSTERIOUS SYMBOLS

A roof-shaped black symbol, known as a "tectiform," drawn in charcoal during the Magdalenian era (ca 15,000 years ago) on the wall of the end passage of Altamira, known as the Horse's Tail.

PEDRO SAURA

Venturing farther into the complex, a small gallery beyond the polychrome ceiling is crammed with enigmatic red signs. Known as the Diverticulum, this tiny gallery is the farthest point in the cave where red coloring has been applied. Farther back in the cave, black forms drawn in charcoal predominate. Some three feet high and 16 feet long, the Diverticulum contains paintings of various symbols consisting of parallel oval designs and repeated series of squares, known as tectiforms. Only by crouching or lying down can these designs be seen clearly. The space is so narrow that only two people can fit at a time.

Similar forms also dominate the Horse's tail, the final gallery of the complex: large, black-lined oval shapes drawn with smaller oval forms creating a net-like pattern inside. Humanlike faces have also been fashioned using the natural angles of the cave wall, with simple lines added in charcoal to suggest eyes, noses, and mouths.

Symbols and Rituals

Although the art of Altamira was created over many centuries by many different people, its elements suggest some kind of parallelism between animal and human activity. The images of deer found throughout, mainly in the form of engravings, are strongly suggestive of fertility. In some cases the stags are presented standing proud, with their horns parallel with their bodies, their heads raised and mouths open—exactly the posture a stag adopts during the rutting season.

The celebrated bison paintings on the main ceiling also suggest a group dynamic that might be related to the hopes and fears of a human community, or perhaps just a literal depiction of animal behavior at that time. The beasts are depicted lying on the ground, grazing or rolling, turning the head. There are adult males and females together.

European bison, which now live primarily in the forests of Poland, join together as a herd for the mating season and reproduction. Perhaps, then, these animal figures represent fertility or maturity, and form part of a ritual related to coming-of-age or reproduction. Next to the bison, and fashioned with the same black and red, there are two horses and a deer whose belly is swollen by the natural form of the cave wall, thereby making it appear pregnant.

The artists used their technical dexterity to make faithful representations of the animals, capturing not only their forms but also their essence. Some of the outlines of the last

ILLUSTRATION: PEDRO SAURA - JUAN DE MATA

A Light in the Darkness

HOW DID THE ALTAMIRA painters light their pitch-black workspace? Specialists in prehistoric art, artists Pedro Saura and Matilde Múzquiz employed ancient lighting techniques when they painted the replica Altamira Cave in 2001. For a low-smoke fuel, they used marrow from animal bones (right), while twisted strands of dried grass served as the wick of a simple lamp (left). Although it was possible to work in the dim light, it was very hard to review or assess their work. The experience convinced Saura of the colossal skills of these early artists and that their achievement puts them among the greatest creators in art history.

PEDRO SAURA

PEDRO SAURA

COPYING THE OLD MASTERS

Artist Pedro Saura photographing the polychrome ceiling. Based on these studies, he coproduced the replica of the cave, opened to the public in 2001.

PEDRO SAURA

charcoal drawings of bison, for instance, are made from hard-lined charcoal, but their legs, eyes, and snouts have been gently smudged to create gray tones, giving volume to the figure.

Why, or for what purpose, were these cave paintings made? There is one clue of extraordinary importance: the use of the rock itself, the way the little imperfections of the walls and ceilings become part of the complete work.

Is this related to the animism of hunter-gatherer societies, in which elements of nature are personified and imbued with human will and intelligence? Does the art represent a union between life and the inert rock, a connection between the figures created and their natural context, uniting the natural world with human expression? The painters and creators of these forms may well have combined their role as artists with that of priests: mediators between the community and the rest of nature.

A Lost World

Many anthropologists believe that the change to a warmer climate 10,000 years ago modified hunter-gatherer culture so that less time was spent in caves, which caused a fall off in the creation of cave art. Altamira's prehistory, however, had been brought to a brusque end some time before: Around 13,500 years ago its entrance collapsed, leaving this Paleolithic art gallery sealed until the 19th century when Sautuola and his daughter ventured inside and found the paintings in the cave.

María Sanz de Sautuola—possibly the first person to see the bison of Altamira since the last ice age—later met with the French archaeologist Émile Cartailhac, who had once poured scorn on her father's claims that the Altamira art was from the Paleolithic. His 1902 visit to Altamira, when he met María , took place in the same year he had issued his famous mea culpa. In this article, he acknowledged his error, "committed 20 years ago . . . an injustice which it is necessary to publicly put right [and for which] it is necessary to bend before reality, and to see justice is done to M. de Sautuola."

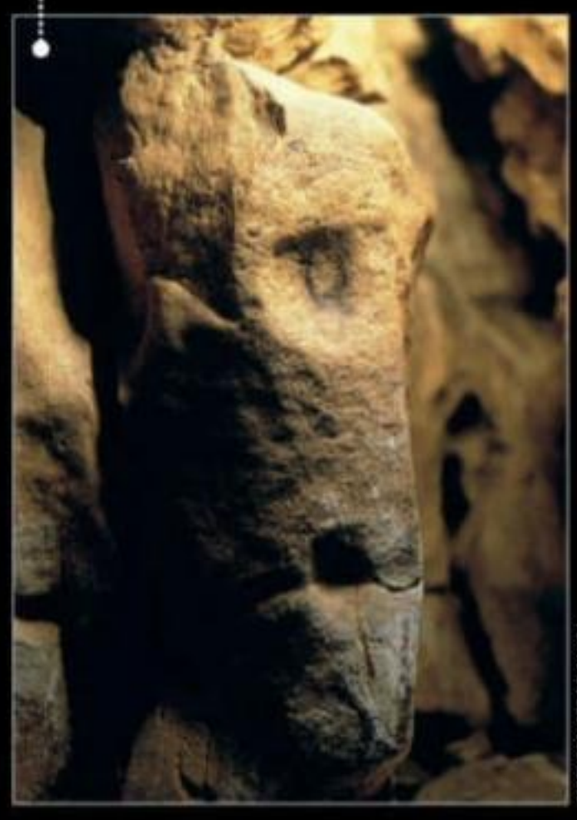
The apology was heartfelt—but it came too late, as María's father had died in 1888. Had he lived, he would have seen his discovery described as the Sistine Chapel of prehistoric art, a place that has become the cornerstone of how Paleolithic peoples are understood and which preserves the earliest memories and thoughts of our distant ancestors. ■

THE LATE **JOSÉ ANTONIO LASHERAS** WAS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL ALTAMIRA MUSEUM, SPAIN, UNTIL 2016.

More Than Meets the Eye

THE ROCK FORMATIONS at the far end of the Altamira complex have a hidden secret. At first glance the walls of the so-called Horse's Tail passage seem ordinary, but a closer look reveals how ancient artists skillfully transformed them into faces—some human, some animal. A few dabs of black paint and the shadows created by lamplight are enough to suggest the startling appearance of eyes, brows, and other facial features. By applying such techniques, the Altamira residents converted solid rock into beings that almost seem to live and breathe. Perhaps the artists of the Magdalenian era saw in these rocks something latent that, once revealed, might bring them closer to the sacred. This capacity to bring out something normally hidden to the community suggests that the painters of Altamira might have also served as priestly figures—shamans or intermediaries—who used their mastery of artistic techniques to bridge the human world and the holy, linking the everyday with something more powerful and spiritual.

LIGHT CREATES EFFECTS OF CHIAROSCURO ON A MAGDALENIAN-ERA MASK IN THE HORSE'S TAIL PASSAGE, ALTAMIRA.



PICTURES: PEDRO SAURA

Three of a Kind

THE REBEL QUEENS OF THEBES

In the 16th century B.C. three queens helped restore a deposed Egyptian dynasty from their southern stronghold in Thebes. Tetisheri, Ahhotep, and Ahmose Nefertari all guided their people back to glory, becoming heroines for the dynasties to come.

IRENE CORDÓN

A QUEEN AMONG GODS

Descended from a line of powerful queens, Ahmose Nefertari, the wife of Ahmose I who conquered the Hyksos, was deified after her death. Statuette found in Deir el Medina. 19th dynasty. Louvre Museum, Paris

CHRISTIAN DECAMPS/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

A QUEEN MOURNS

Queen Ahhotep recovers her fallen husband Seqenenre Tao who died fighting the Hyksos in the middle of the second millennium B.C. Lithograph, 1910

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

STELA OF AHMOSE, FROM THE TEMPLE OF KARNAK, DEPICTING THE KING PRESENTING OFFERINGS TO HIS GRANDMOTHER, QUEEN TETISHERI. EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, CAIRO

SCALA, FLORENCE

EGYPT EXPELS THE HYKSOS

Ancient Egypt fell to a brutal invasion in the late 18th century B.C., an event described by Egyptian scholar Manetho more than a millennium after it happened. Egypt had been conquered by invaders, a people Manetho called the *heqa khasut,* foreign rulers—a term that later evolved into the Greek "Hyksos." Thought to originate from an area in modern-day Israel, the Hyksos arrived on the scene during Egypt's 13th dynasty.

Egyptian rulers were able to hold them off until about 1650 B.C., when the Hyksos, growing more militarily powerful, captured the ancient royal city of Memphis in a decisive victory that brought Egypt's Middle Kingdom to an end. Writing in the fourth or third century B.C., Manetho described how the Hyksos overwhelmed Egypt:

> Suddenly from the regions of the East, invaders of an obscure race marched in confidence of victory against our land. They easily seized it without striking a blow; and having overpowered the rulers, they then burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods, and treated all the natives with a cruel hostility.

The Hyksos controlled the north, but a separate dynasty was growing in the south, centered in Thebes and guided by powerful queens.

CIRCA 1700S B.C.

Fleeing famine, the Hyksos arrive from the eastern Mediterranean and settle in large numbers in the lands of the Nile Delta.

CIRCA 1650 B.C.

The Hyksos occupy Memphis, ending the 13th and 14th dynasties. With their capital at Avaris, the Hyksos form Egypt's 15th dynasty.

NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD GOD

Victory over the Hyksos raised the profile of the Theban deity Amun across Egypt. At the Temple of Amun in Karnak, Ahmose Nefertari was the first queen to hold the powerful position Wife of the God.

ADAM JONES/AGE FOTOSTOCK

CIRCA 1545 B.C.

Seqenenre Tao II, of the 17th dynasty of Thebes, dies fighting the Hyksos, exhorted by his mother, Tetisheri, and Ahhotep, his sister and wife.

CIRCA 1540 B.C.

Theban pharaoh Kamose is killed fighting the Hyksos. Seqenenre Tao's widow, Ahhotep, acts as regent to her young son, Ahmose.

CIRCA 1521 B.C.

The adult Ahmose conquers Avaris, the Hyksos capital in the delta, driving the Hyksos from an Egypt now reunited under his strong rule.

CIRCA 1514 B.C.

Ahmose dies. His sister and wife, Ahmose Nefertari, plays an active role in the reign of their son, Amenhotep I.

EUGÉNIE, EMPRESS OF FRANCE, IN AN 1853 PORTRAIT BY LOUIS-ÉDOUARD DUBUFE. NATIONAL CASTLE MUSEUM, PALAIS DE COMPIÈGNE

LEEMAGE/GETTY IMAGES

The Desire of a French Empress

THE TOMB OF Ahmose I has, so far, not been identified. In 1859, however, the tomb thought to belong to his mother, Queen Ahhotep, was discovered in the Theban necropolis of Dra Abu el-Naga. The sarcophagus containing the mummy of the founding mother of the 18th dynasty was discovered along with a trove of magnificent grave goods.

FOLLOWING ITS DISCOVERY, Ahhotep's treasure was coveted by another queen. In 1867 the jewels were taken to Paris for the Universal Exhibition. Empress Eugénie, Napoleon III's wife, was so fascinated with them, she asked the viceroy of Egypt to give them to her. Alarmed, Auguste Mariette, the director of Egyptian antiquities and discoverer of Ahhotep's treasures, hurriedly sent them back to Cairo.

FLYING IN THE FACE OF FEAR
One of three golden flies (below) found in Ahhotep's tomb was given to her by her son Ahmose in recognition of her courage against the Hyksos. Egyptian Museum, Cairo

DEA/AGE FOTOSTOCK

The Theban Resistance

Ruling Egypt as its 15th dynasty, the Hyksos occupied swathes of northern and central Egypt for the next century. Far to the south, however, parallel dynasties—the 16th and the 17th—were established, formed in part by the original rulers of that area, who saw themselves as the continuation of native Egyptian power.

The southern city of Thebes served as the base of the Egyptian challenge to the Hyksos. The city sat on the banks of the Nile, more than 400 miles south of the modern city of Cairo. The kings of the 16th dynasty survived as vassals of the Hyksos, but the 17th dynasty began to fight back with the help of three women, all queens of Thebes: Tetisheri, daughter Ahhotep, and granddaughter Ahmose Nefertari.

Ahhotep is one of the few queens to have golden flies, awarded for military service, among her treasures.

The contributions of these women are less well-known than the queens who follow, such as Queen Tiy (Amenhotep III's wife) and Nefertiti. Because of these queens' partnerships with their husbands and their ability to rule as regents, the Egyptians were able to strike back against the Hyksos and retake their cities in the north around 1521 B.C. After these three queens, a new kingdom would dawn, led by some of Egypt's greatest pharaohs: Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Amenhotep III.

The Matriarchy Is Born

The Hyksos king Apophis I ruled the north from the city of Avaris in the Nile Delta. During this time, Pharaoh Seqenenre Tao II ruled in the southern, Theban lands. Seqenenre Tao launched a campaign to challenge the Hyksos rule and was backed by many, including his own mother, Queen Tetisheri. A forthright, shrewd woman who wielded great influence over her son, Tetisheri was the matriarch of a great Egyptian family beginning with her son Seqenenre Tao and daughter Ahhotep, a woman whose long life was also destined to have a major impact on her nation.

A QUEEN'S RANSOM

Although the mummy inside the sarcophagus was extensively damaged, Queen Ahhotep's grave goods were in good condition. Her treasures are held by the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Scarab
Suspended from a chain, this gold and lapis lazuli scarab is a symbol of rebirth in the afterlife. ▼

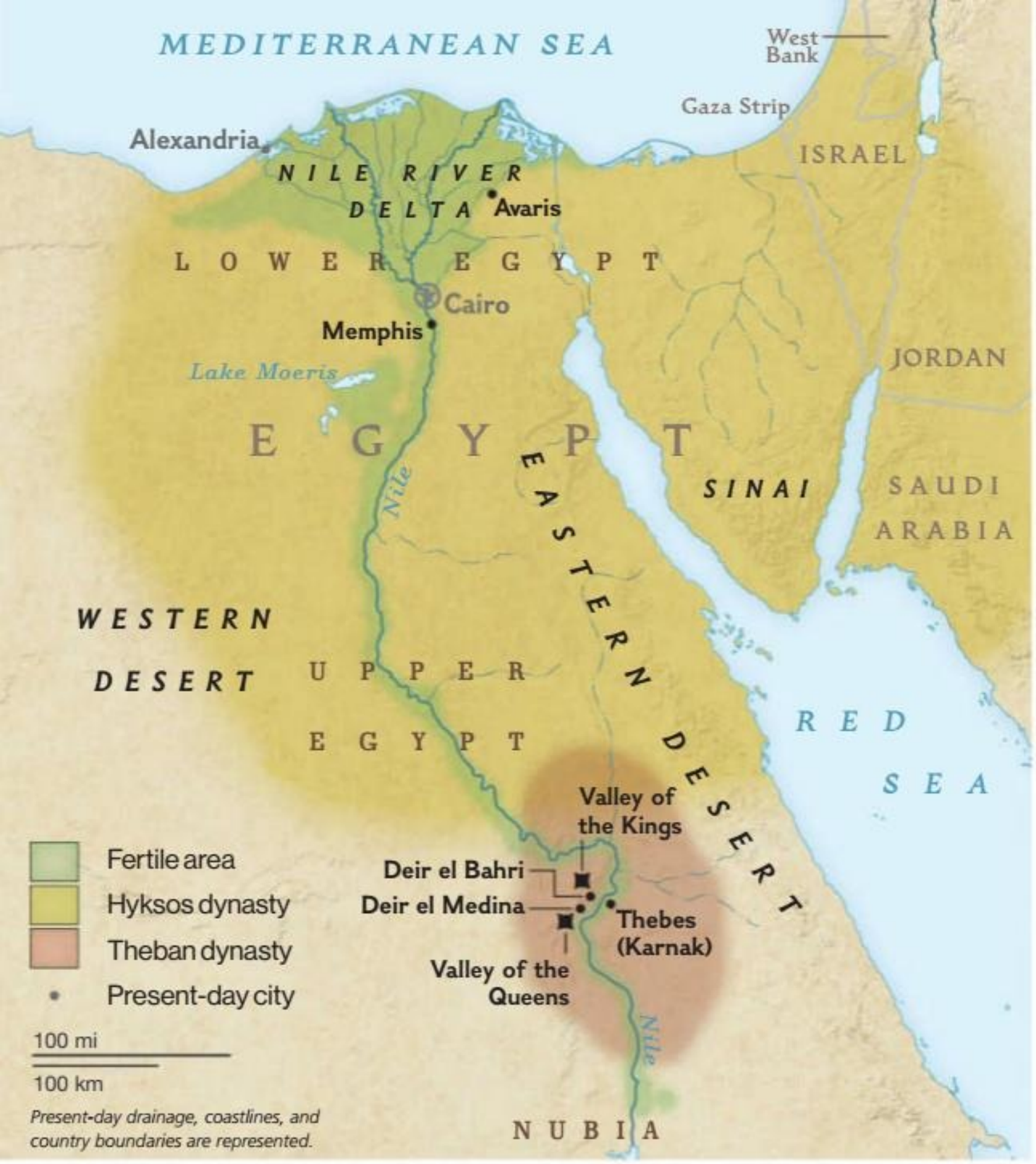
Sarcophagus ▸
The queen's impressive golden coffin contained her mummified body. Measuring almost seven feet long, it is wood gilded with gold and decorated with alabaster and obsidian.

◂ ***Dagger***
A gold pin links the silver hilt and the bronze blade, which is inscribed on both sides with the name of Ahmose.

Bracelet
Decorated with gold and lapis lazuli, this band depicts the souls of Pe and Nekhen, the queen's ancestors. Kneeling, their arms are raised in the *henu* position, typically used in ceremonies and celebrations. ▼

Boat
Depicting oarsmen and a helmsman, this miniature silver boat is one of a pair of vessels found in the tomb. ▼

SCARAB, DAGGER, AND BOAT: A. GUILLEUX/AGE FOTOSTOCK. SARCOPHAGUS: ARALDO DE LUCA. BRACELET: KHARBINE-TAPABOR/ART ARCHIVE



NG MAPS/JON BOWEN

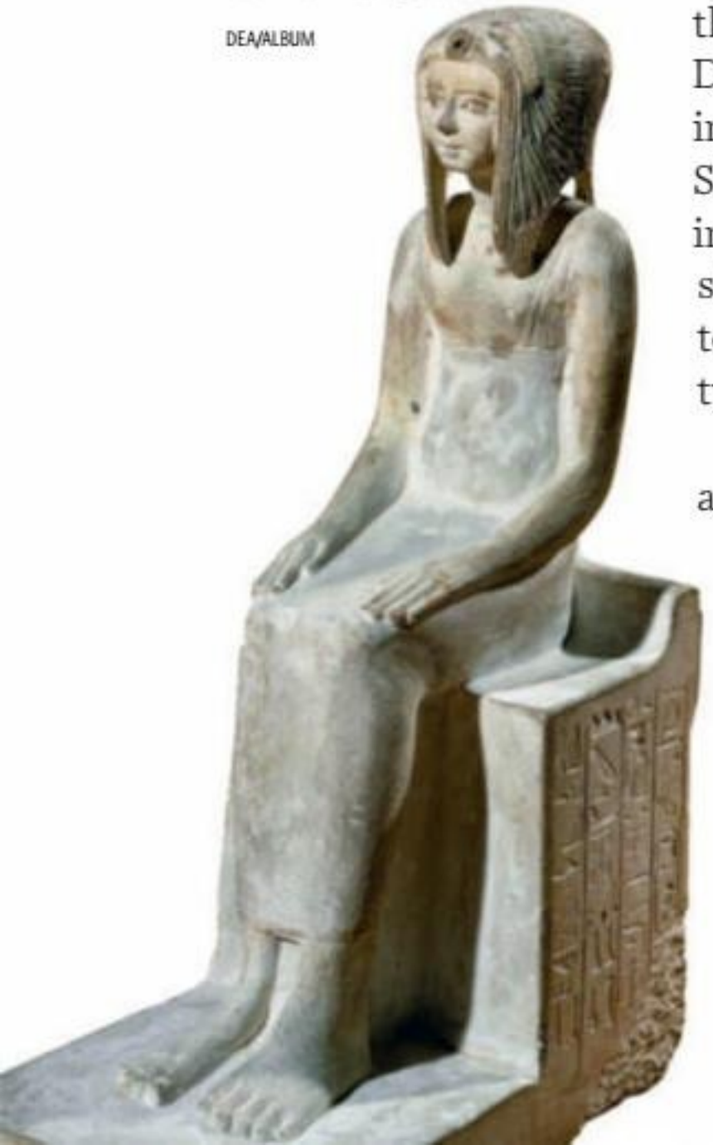
reigned as regent during this time since her son was too young to rule officially. Thebes needed strong leadership at this moment, and Ahhotep proved up to the challenge. Menaced by the Hyksos to the north, Ahhotep faced a threat from the south as well. Nubia had forged an alliance with Hyksos, creating a threat to Thebes on two sides. Already rattled by internal revolts, the queen was forced to reckon with problems on several fronts to defend the kingdom.

The details of Ahhotep's regency are sketchy in places (and there is still considerable confusion over her and her son's relationship with another queen named Ahhotep II). Evidence exists for the important role Ahhotep played in continuing with the anti-Hyksos campaign, even as Thebes faced dangers from the south. Military honors were found among her grave goods. A large stela in the temple at Karnak describes Queen Ahhotep's significance:

> She governs vast numbers of people and cares for Egypt wisely; she has attended to its army; she has looked after it; she has forced its enemies to leave and united dissenters; she has pacified Upper and Lower Egypt and made the rebels submit.

THE GREAT MATRIARCH

This figurine (below), held by the British Museum, bears Tetisheri's name, but its authenticity has come into question.


DEA/ALBUM

As was common royal practice for the time period, Ahhotep and Seqenenre Tao, sister and brother, married each other. Having inherited a decisive, tenacious spirit from Tetisheri, Ahhotep also supported her husband's fight against the Hyksos occupation in the north. But his fight was to be short-lived. Seqenenre Tao died as a result of wounds received in battle with the Hyksos. Analysis of his mummy, found at Deir el Bahri in the 19th century and now held in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, shows that Seqenenre Tao's skull bore signs of ax wounds in the neck and in the forehead as well as a shattered cheekbone. The impacts appeared to be have been inflicted by a narrow ax blade typical of the Hyksos.

Despite the death of the king, the war against the Hyksos continued. The next king, Kamose—perhaps a son of Seqenenre Tao and Ahhotep—continued the rebellion against the Hyksos. Like his predecessor, Kamose would die on the battlefield just three short years after his accession.

His successor was Ahmose, the young son of Ahhotep and Seqenenre Tao II. Historians believe that Queen Ahhotep

The pharaoh also took the care to honor his grandmother Tetisheri by building a cenotaph to her in Abydos, the center of the cult of Osiris, the god of the afterlife.

By the time he was ruling as pharaoh, Ahmose was able to complete the campaigns started by his mother and others before her. Around 1521 B.C., he captured Memphis and the Hyksos stronghold of Avaris. With Ahhotep maintaining control in Thebes, Ahmose seized gold-rich territories in Nubia to the south, and then he returned north to drive the Hyksos from the Egyptian border, beyond the Sinai. After a century of turmoil, the first king of the 18th dynasty ruled, at last, over a reunited Egypt.

To Greater Glory

Following tradition, Ahmose took his sister as his wife. Like the matriarchs preceding her, Queen Ahmose Nefertari was well prepared to rule because she had witnessed firsthand the hardships involved. As a young princess, she had witnessed her father's death in the offensive against the Hyksos, her brother and husband's ascension to the throne as a child, her mother's regency, and her family's victory over the foreign

THE ENDURING POWER OF QUEEN AHMOSE NEFERTARI

This stela, which is now in the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy, belonged to the royal scribe Amenemope, and was found in his tomb at Deir el Medina. It depicts him and his son worshipping Deir el Medina's deified patrons, Ahmose Nefertari and her son, Amenhotep I. It was created in the time of Ramses II, some two centuries after Amenhotep and Ahmose Nefertari's deaths.

Ahmose Nefertari
wears the *shuti* crown on her head with a vulture headdress. These crowns were typically adorned with two feathers, which could be from a falcon or an ostrich.

Amenhotep I
wears a cobra headdress—the uraeus—representing Wadjet, goddess of Lower Egypt, and grasps the *heqa*, a symbol of royalty.

Amenemope
kneels as the offeror of the stela. Bearer of the title "Servant of the Place of Truth" in Deir el Medina, he was the royal scribe under Seti I and Ramses II.

Amenemope's son
Amenakht joins his father to kneel in worship of the royal pair, the patrons of their city, and illustrious ancestors of Seti I and Ramses II.

SCALA, FLORENCE

Wife and Mother Both

ACCORDING TO the Egyptian myth of Kamutef, every night the sun god inseminated Nut, the goddess of heaven. Every morning, she gave birth to him again in a process of daily renewal. Nut is therefore both the mother and wife of the sun. In royal mythology, the pharaoh hoped to achieve renewal in a similar way to the myth, in which mother and wife were conceptualized identically.

IN PRACTICE, this role was represented by two women—the monarch's mother and wife—who were both identified, in ceremonial terms, as one. Each principal wife of the pharaoh was thus also supposed to be a mother of a pharaoh, so if a king's mother had not been a Great Royal Wife during her husband's reign, she was given that title during her son's reign.

THE GODDESS NUT RECEIVES THE SUN—THE RED DISK—AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF NIGHT AND DAY. CEILING OF THE 20TH-DYNASTY TOMB OF RAMSES VI, VALLEY OF THE KINGS, EGYPT

KENNETH GARRETT

AN IMMORTAL QUEEN

Worshipped for centuries after her death, Ahmose Nefertari is depicted on this 20th-dynasty stela. British Museum, London

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

invaders. From her mother she inherited the strength and energy needed to rule as queen, supervising the transition to the period of peace and harmony from wartime. As an intimate counselor to her husband, Ahmose Nefertari played a leading political role in the building of a reunified Egypt during their son Amenhotep I's reign, consolidating the family's rise from a southern to a united dynasty.

Ahmose Nefertari came to play an important role in Egyptian religion. She was given the title "Wife of the God," which reflected her privileged position among the priests of the god Amun in Thebes. Reflecting the rise in Theban influence, Amun—until then a regional deity—was becoming the most powerful god in the whole of Egypt. The bestowal of this title, confirming the queen's political and religious power, is described on the so-called Donation Stela, which was erected in the Temple of Amun in Karnak. The stela served as a legal document that established the role the queen was to play in the temple, together with a large donation of land and goods by Pharaoh Ahmose to the queen and her heirs. The function of the new title was priestly, which gave her high social standing and, more important, allowed her to participate in the lives of the gods, thus giving her divine protection against danger.

Ahmose Nefertari was also notably involved in monitoring and supervising construction. Her name is on texts recording the opening of mines and quarries, whose wealth would underwrite the achievements of the 18th dynasty. Together with her son Amenhotep I, she was traditionally regarded as the patron of what is today known as Deir el Medina, the village for craftsmen working on the construction of royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

In the course of her long life, she had witnessed the expulsion of the Hyksos and the reigns of many kings, including her grandson, Thutmose I. When she died, Egypt was plunged into a period of national mourning. Later, she was deified. She became the inspiration for later powerful women of the 18th dynasty, such as Hatshepsut, whose military exploits and cultural monuments mark one of the pinnacles in ancient Egypt's long story. ■

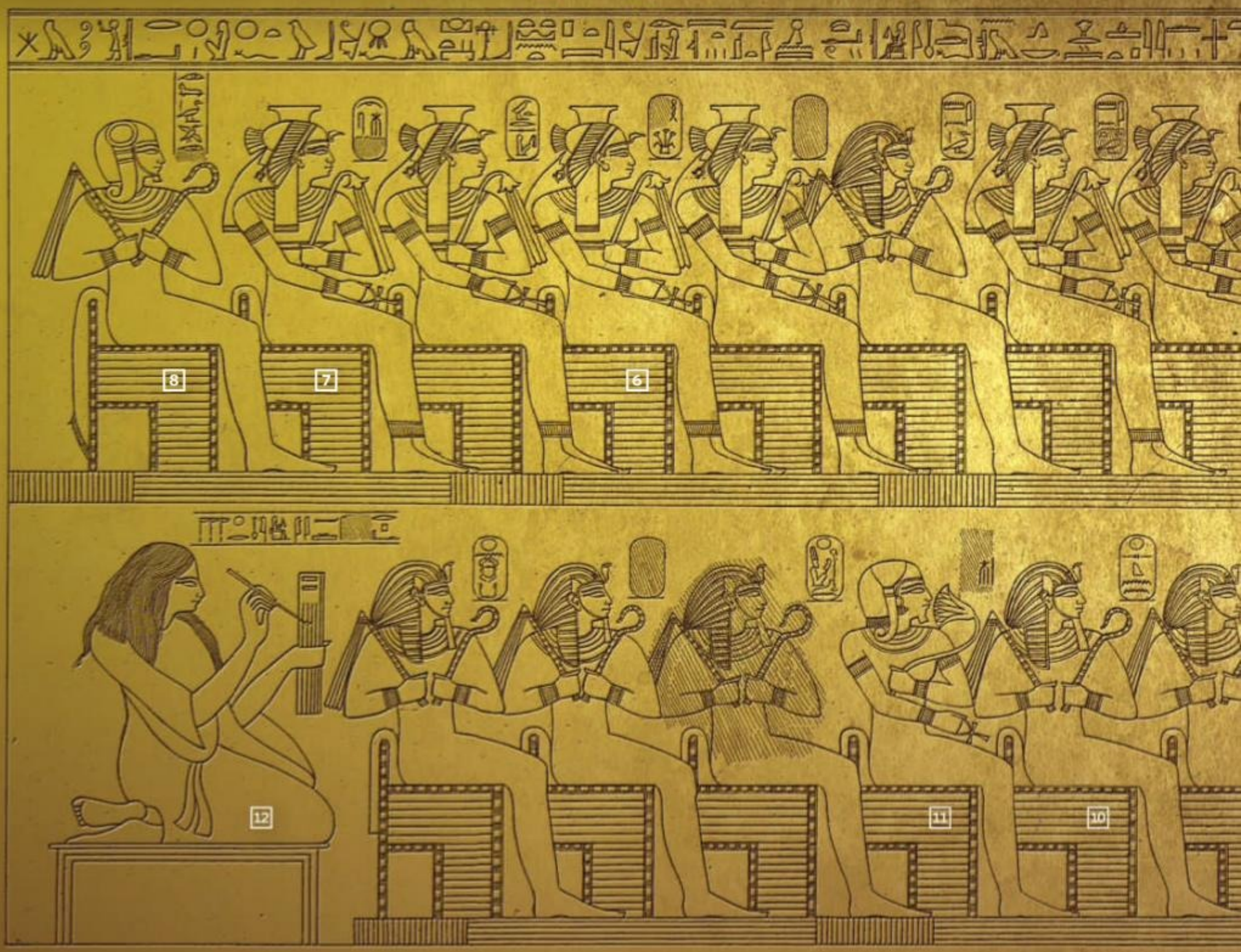
IRENE CORDÓN HAS WRITTEN MANY PUBLICATIONS ON THE ANCIENT TOMB-BUILDING COMMUNITY OF DEIR EL MEDINA IN EGYPT.

THE POWER TO INSPIRE
A masterpiece of the 18th dynasty, the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut lies in the Deir el Bahri complex near ancient Thebes. A powerful queen who ruled in her own right, Hatshepsut could look back to her female ancestors as inspiring role models.

TUUL & BRUNO MORANDI/FOTOTECA

HERO AND HEROINE WORSHIP

Art from the 20th dynasty pays homage to Egypt's past freedom fighters.



INHERKHAU LIVED in the 12th century B.C. and held the high status title of Foreman of the Lord of the Two Lands in the Place of Truth, which meant that he oversaw the construction of tombs at Thebes. After his death, his mummy was interred in a richly decorated tomb at Deir el Medina. In the tomb is a relief showing the deceased and his wife paying homage to past sovereigns, mainly from the 17th and 18th dynasties, a sign that these liberators had become heroes in the eyes of their descendants. Time has damaged the relief (reproduced here), but archaeologists' sketches have preserved its contents for history.

1 ***Inherkhau***
The occupant of the tomb is depicted as a funerary priest, wearing a leopard skin and offering incense to the two rows of royalty.

2 ***Wabet***
Behind Inherkhau stands his wife Wabet, depicted as tall as her husband and also shown honoring the rulers from the past.

3 ***Amenhotep I***
Holding the crook and flail (symbols of royal authority), the first king in the top row is Amenhotep I, the second pharaoh of the 18th dynasty.

4 ***Ahmose***
The first pharaoh of the 18th dynasty and defeater of the Hyksos wears the uraeus and the distinctive *nemes* headdress.

UNIVERSITÄTS- UND LANDESBIBLIOTHEK SACHSEN-ANHALT, HALLE

5 ***Ahhotep***
Mother of Ahmose and Queen Ahmose Nefertari, Queen Ahhotep wears the vulture headdress of the Great Royal Wife.

6 ***Ahmose Henuttamehu***
This daughter of Seqenenre Tao II and Ahmose Inhapi was another of Pharaoh Ahmose's sisters and secondary wives.

7 ***Ahmose Nebetta***
Another of Seqenenre Tao's daughters, she is also one of her brother Ahmose's wives but did not hold the title of Great Royal Wife.

8 ***Ahmose Sipair***
This figure is possibly the son of Ahmose and Ahmose Nefertari. Amenhotep I became heir to the throne after the crown prince's death.

9 ***Ahmose Nefertari***
The black skin of Ahmose's Great Royal Wife is believed to be symbolic of both her fertility and her role as mother of Egypt.

10 ***Seqenenre Tao II***
Died on the battlefield fighting the Hyksos invaders. His mummy shows he suffered fatal injuries to his head.

11 ***Prince with Lotus***
This unidentified figure has no name in his royal cartouche, but he is shown with a lotus flower, a symbol of eternity, and a child's braid.

12 ***The Scribe***
Some say this figure is Amenhotep, the great architect who served Amenhotep III. He is shown recording the events.

AN EPIC CLASH

The Greeks and the Trojans fight for the body of Patroclus—friend of the Greek warrior Achilles—on this krater (above) from the sixth century B.C. Opposite, this gold funerary mask was found at Mycenae in 1876 by Heinrich Schliemann, who believed it to belong to Agamemnon, a central figure in *The Iliad*. The mask is on display at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

DEA/GETTY IMAGES

The Iliad of Homer

WORDS OF WAR POEM OF PEACE

Composed in the eighth century B.C., Homer's poem tells of the long conflict between Greece and Troy. Laying bare the harsh realities and dire consequences of war, the timeless tale reveals how none—conquered as well as conqueror—ever escape unscathed from its savagery.

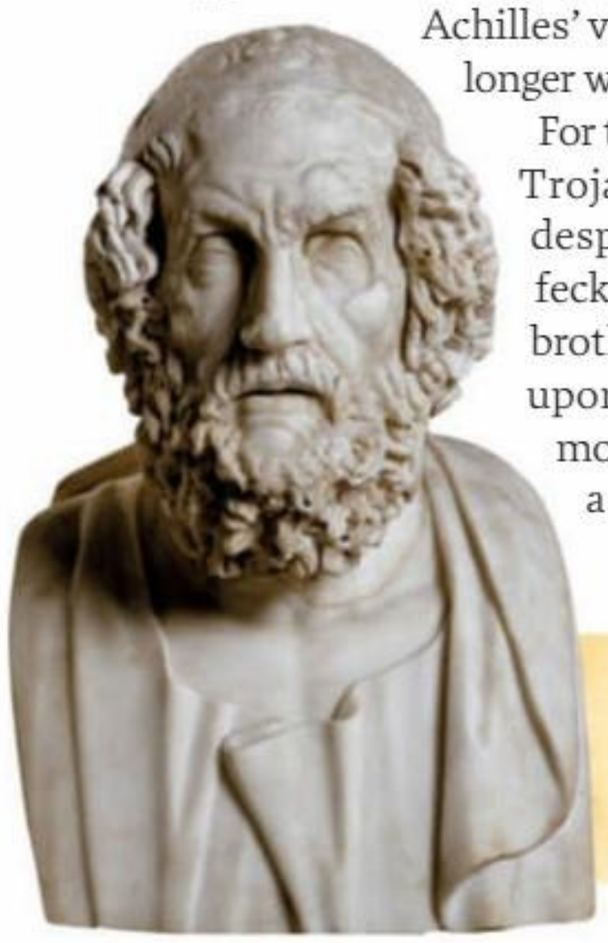
CAROLINE ALEXANDER

LUISA RICCIARINI/PRISMA ARCHIVO

The Iliad, Homer's epic poem about the legendary Trojan War was composed around 730 B.C. It depicts the struggles of soldiers in two armies fighting over the city of Troy, or Ilios, as it is also known. The invading Achaeans—Homer's name for the Bronze Age Greeks—have come to take back Helen, the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, who ran off with Paris, a prince of Troy. The armies have fought for 10 long years: Troy's city walls stand strong with no sign of falling.

The war has ground to a stalemate. The Trojans for their part are fighting not only to keep Helen but also for the survival of their city. The epic gives many ominous forecasts of the fate that awaits a conquered people—men put to the sword, women raped and carried off as slaves, cities in flames—so for the Trojans, winning the Trojan War is a question of survival or annihilation.

The Achaeans are a coalition of kingdoms from all over the Greek world brought under the command of Menelaus's wealthy and powerful brother Agamemnon, king of Mycenae. They have grown weary of war. Their ships, beached at the edge of the Trojan plain, are decaying from disuse. Their greatest warrior, Achilles, has just publicly denounced, in the most bluntly brutal terms, both the war and his commander. It appears that much of the Achaean host shares Achilles' view that the war is no longer worth fighting.



For their part, the besieged Trojans are increasingly desperate. Unexpectedly, feckless Paris turns to his brother Hector, the leader upon whom the Trojans most depend, and makes a welcome suggestion: Paris will challenge Menelaus to a duel. The two, then, will fight it out man to man while the rest of their armies, Achaean and Trojan, "swearing faithful oaths of friendship," can be left to "dwell in Troy where the soil is rich, or return / to the horse-grazed pastures of Argos and Achaea with its beautiful women."

Swiftly Hector announces this offer to the Achaeans. Menelaus accepts, and a treaty is cut to sanctify the outcome of the duel.

So he spoke, and both Achaeans and
Trojans rejoiced,
hoping to make an end of the sorrowful
war.
And they reined the chariots into line, and
themselves descended
and took off their armor, and placed it
on the ground
close together, and there was little earth
left between. . . .
And thus would a man speak, both Trojan
and Achaean;
"Zeus most glorious and greatest, and all
you immortal gods,
those who first do harm in violation of the
sacred treaty—on whichever side they
be—
may their brains flow—thus—upon the

Homer's *Iliad* opens in the 10th year of the war, which has ground to a stalemate.

HOMER, HELD BY TRADITION TO HAVE WRITTEN *THE ILIAD* AND ITS SEQUEL, *THE ODYSSEY.* BUST FROM THE FARNESE COLLECTION, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, NAPLES
SCALA, FLORENCE

TROY STORY: FACTS AND MYTHS

Late 13th CENTURY B.C.

Researchers place the Trojan War between the ancient Greeks (Achaeans) and the Trojans near the end of the 13th century B.C.

Circa 1200-1150 B.C.

The Mycenaean civilization collapses owing to various factors, including foreign invasions and natural and economic disasters.

9TH CENTURY B.C.

Aeolic-speaking Greeks establish themselves on the mainland and islands near Troy. It is believed that local legends of the Trojan War may have entered their traditions.

8TH CENTURY B.C.

Homer composes *The Iliad*, incorporating the earlier oral Trojan stories.

FROM 5TH CENTURY B.C.

Tragedians of classical Athens adapt the myth, in turn inspiring works such as the *Posthomerica* (circa third century A.D.) and later, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (ca 1380).

PHOTSAM/ALBUM

GOLDEN LION HEAD FROM MYCENAE. CA 1550 B.C. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ATHENS

CITY OF AGAMEMNON

The Lion Gate at Mycenae in the Peloponnesus, southern Greece. The city was the capital of the civilization of which Agamemnon—the Greek commander during the Trojan War—was a legendary king.

HERCULES MILAS/ALAMY/ACI

FINE ART IMAGES/AGE FOTOSTOCK

LOVE AND WAR

"The Rape of Helen," an 18th-century painting by Gavin Hamilton, shows Paris, prince of Troy, abducting Helen, the world's most beautiful woman. His reckless act prompts her husband, Menelaus, to declare war on Troy. Pushkin State Museum, Moscow

ground, like this wine,
and the brains of their children, and may
their wives be forced by other men."
So they spoke; but the son of Cronus did
not accomplish this for them.
(Book III)

It is a remarkable scene in a great war epic—the warriors of both armies making violent prayer to go home in peace. The scene is wholly consistent with the epic's depiction of war as something loathed and dreaded by all who must participate. *Lugrós, polúdakros, dusêlegês, ainós*—wretched, accompanied by many tears, bringing much woe, dread: These are the adjectives *The Iliad* uses for war. Every man and woman, warrior and civilian, wants the long war to end.

Many people who have not read *The Iliad* but know it only by reputation have the impression that this great poem stands as a glorification of war. Yet from its earliest scenes the epic evokes the complexities of what may be called the enduring realities of war experience. The epic roars off to a blazing start with the confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon, in which Achilles challenges the necessity of the war in the first place and denounces the greed of the commander he serves.

The morale of the Achaean army—the eventual victors it must be remembered—is so low that in one early scene the rank and file make a mad dash for their ships in a bid to go home. The fickleness of gods and fate makes every duel and battle a game of hazard as much as skill: The gods are not fair to men in either life or death. Above all, *The Iliad* relentlessly depicts the war as a hated force that blights every life it touches. Warriors, Greek and Trojan, the women they capture and the women they love, those too young to fight and those too old, the victorious and the vanquished, the wounded, the dying, the dead—the fate of all are evoked by *The Iliad*. And all the while, looming ever closer, is the

The Iliad depicts the war as a hated force that blights the lives of all, Greek or Trojan.

BRONZE ARMOR AND HELMET MADE WITH WILD BOAR TUSKS, FOUND IN DENDRA, NEAR MYCENAE, GREECE. 16TH CENTURY B.C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, NAFPLIO, GREECE

HERITAGE/AGE FOTOSTOCK

SAVED BY A GODDESS
THIS FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. CUP BY KALLIADES DEPICTS THE MOMENT IN *THE ILIAD* WHEN APHRODITE (FAR LEFT) INTERVENES TO PREVENT MENELAUS (LEFT) FROM KILLING PARIS (RIGHT). LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

DIVINE INTERVENTION. **Paris—also known as Alexandros—is the first to hurl his spear, but it is deflected by Menelaus's shield. Menelaus retaliates:**

[B]alancing the long-shadowed spear he hurled it, . . .
The heavy spear ran through the gleaming shield,
and was forced through his elaborate breastplate . . .

Paris, though, ducks to one side. Menelaus

drew his silver-studded sword
and raising his arm, struck the helmet ridge; and on both sides of the ridge
his sword—shattered into three, into four pieces—fell from his hand.

In desperation, Menelaus makes a third assault on Paris,

and springing forward seized Alexandros' horsehair-crested helmet,
and wheeling about, dragged him toward the strong-greaved Achaeans;
and the elaborately embellished strap choked Alexandros beneath his soft throat,
stretched tight under his chin to secure his helmet.

But Aphrodite, goddess of love, intervenes and saves Paris away by snapping the strap and stealing him away from the battlefield.

THE ILIAD, *BOOK III*

TROY WILL RISE AGAIN

As many as nine different "Troys" have existed at this site—each new version of the city built on top of the ruins of the old one. The Romans even built cities here; the Agora, or central market place, remains today. Many scholars believe that the layer known as Troy VI may correspond to the Bronze Age period in which Homer set *The Iliad*.

JAMES L. STANFIELD/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/GETTY IMAGES

A. DE LUCA/DEA/GETTY IMAGES

THE FINAL FAREWELL

This 19th-century painting by Fernando Castelli depicts the heartrending moment when Andromache, Hector's wife, stands with their infant son Astyanax as she pleads with her husband not to return to battle.

imminent destruction of the city of Troy and all her people as casualties of this hateful conflict.

The fate of Troy and the Trojans forms the emotional heart of the epic, a remarkable fact given that *The Iliad* is a Greek poem about a legendary Greek campaign—indeed, from earliest times, the Greek national epic. Yet *The Iliad*'s even-handed treatment of the Trojans is one of its most distinctive and haunting characteristics. This is seen in the little, fleeting biographies that accompany the deaths of minor warriors:

> *Then Diomedes of the war cry killed Axylos,*
> *the son of Teuthras, who lived in strong-*
> *built Arisbe,*
> *a rich man, he was a friend to mankind;*
> *for he welcomed all men, dwelling as he*
> *did in a house by the wayside.*
>
> (Book VI)

Since many more Trojans die than Achaeans in *The Iliad*, the epic is dense with pathos for the humanized, vanquished foe.

This sympathetic rendering of the enemy is most memorably apparent on the grand scale, however, in scenes that are hailed as among the greatest in literature. Among these is the Trojan warrior Hector's parting from his wife Andromache and their child within the wall of Troy, as she begs him not to return to battle:

> *She met him then, and her attendant came*
> *with her,*
> *the child held against her breast, tender-*
> *hearted, just a baby,*
> *the cherished only child of Hector,*
> *beautiful like a star,*
> .....
> *And looking at his child in silence,*
> *Hector smiled,*
> *but Andromache came and stood close to*
> *him shedding tears*
> *and clung to him with her hand and spoke*
> *to him and said his name:*
> *"Inhuman one, your strength will destroy*
> *you, and you take no pity*
> *on the child and young one, or on me who*
> *have no future, who will soon be*
> *bereft of you; the Achaeans will soon kill you,*
> *the whole of them rushing in attack. And*

The fate of Troy and the Trojans forms the emotional heart of the epic.

MYCENAEAN GOLD RING DEPICTING A HUNTING SCENE. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ATHENS

LUISA RICCIARINI/PRISMA ARCHIVO

HEAD TO HEAD THE TROJAN HECTOR (RIGHT), PROTECTED BY APOLLO, BATTLES THE GREEK AJAX (LEFT), CHAMPIONED BY ATHENA ON THIS FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. CUP BY KALLIADES. LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

THE HEAT OF BATTLE. **Hector's spear glances off Ajax's armor and Hector has to withdraw. Then Ajax takes a stone, striking**

Hector in the chest above his shield rim, near the throat;
and with the blow sent him spinning like a top, and Hector whirled
entirely around.

Believing that their beloved hero is dead,

. . . his companions
lifting him in their arms carried him from the battle toil, until they came
to his swift
horses, who behind the line of battle and the fighting
stood waiting for him, holding their patterned chariot and charioteer;
and they carried him to the city groaning heavily to the city.

THE ILIAD, *BOOK XIV*

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

A FALLEN COMRADE
The funeral games organized by Achilles to honor his beloved friend Patroclus, killed in battle at Troy. Painting by Carle Vernet, 1790, National Museum of San Carlos, Mexico City

for me it would be better
with you lost to go down beneath the
earth; for no other
comfort will there be hereafter, when you
meet your fate,
but grief. . . .

(Book VI)

Such scenes make it impossible to hate the Trojans; and if there is no hated enemy for the Greeks to vanquish—how can one glorify their victory?

History of an Epic

The Iliad's remarkable emotional sympathy can perhaps be explained by the history of the time. In a broad and somewhat fuzzy outline, the Bronze Age world evoked by *The Iliad* falls within the period dating from the 17th to the end of the 13th century B.C., a period historians name "Mycenaean," for Mycenae, the principal Greek citadel-state of the time.

This era ended dramatically and suddenly, around 1200 B.C., a generation or so after the fall of the historic city of Troy, during a time that saw the collapse of many eastern Mediterranean powers. Numerous explanations are offered for this collapse—natural disaster, plague, internal unrest, disruption of trade, foreign marauders, and severe and widespread drought.

Following the collapse of the Mycenaean kingdoms, refugees from different parts of the Greek-speaking world began to migrate from their homelands to seek new lives throughout the Mediterranean and Aegean. The different paths these waves of refugees took can be tracked by the dialects of Greek they spoke. Those from Thessaly and Boeotia (regions of central Greece) took their dialect, known as Aeolic, eastward as far as the coast of Anatolia (now Turkey) and the island of Lesbos (which, in our own time has become a tragic hot spot of modern migration). Archaeological evidence shows that the island's original inhabitants shared the same culture as the inhabitants of the Troad—the region around Troy. Thus the Aeolic-speaking Greeks had settled among a people who were, in terms of culture, Trojans.

The Iliad is set during the Greek Bronze Age, known as the Mycenaean period.

MYCENAEAN CUP DISCOVERED AT VAPHIO, NEAR SPARTA, DECORATED WITH A BULL HUNT. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ATHENS
SCALA, FLORENCE

THE DEATH OF A FRIEND MENELAUS DEFENDS THE SLAIN PATROCLUS, BELOVED FRIEND OF ACHILLES, FROM BEING CARRIED OFF BY THE TROJANS ON THIS FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. KRATER. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, AGRIGENTO, ITALY

ORONOZ/ALBUM

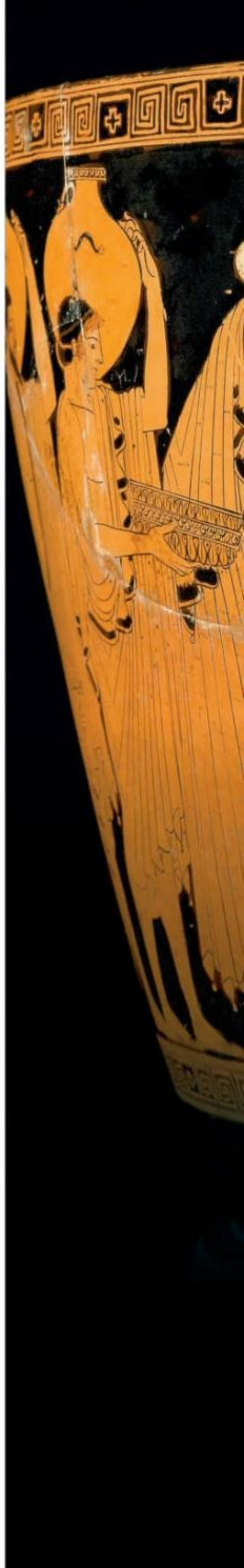
HONORING THE DEAD **The Trojans want Patroclus's body as a trophy, but the Greeks**

with relief pulled Patroclus out from under the missiles,
and laid him on a litter; and his beloved companions stood around it
weeping, and with them followed swift-footed Achilles
shedding hot tears, when he looked upon his trusted comrade
lying on the bier, torn with sharp bronze,
. . . . . .
So speaking godlike Achilles ordered his companions
to set a great cauldron on its three-legged stand astride the fire, so that
with all speed
they could wash away the clotted blood from Patroclus . . .

THE ILIAD, *BOOK XVIII*

DEA/GETTY IMAGES

LOOKING FOR TROY

In 1871 Heinrich Schliemann began excavating a site near Hisarlik in Turkey, believing it to be the actual place where Homer's poem is set. Ruins of a Roman-era theater (left) stand there today.

While these immigrants had lost a great deal, they still brought with them much of value, such as their gods, their language, and their stories. Here in the region of Lesbos, memories of the lost Mycenaean world were handed down in stories and poems: tales of great cities rich in gold, muddled memories of battles fought and types of armor, exploits of warriors who fought like lions and communed with the gods, and a Thessalian superhero called Achilles.

Eventually the tradition was passed on to poets using another dialect, that of Ionic Greek. Nonetheless, it is tempting to speculate that this period, in which Aeolic poets shaped the tradition while living in the shadow of Troy, accounts for the Greek epic's emotional investment in the tragedy of the Trojans. Did the Aeolic poets hear tales of the war from the Trojan side?

Words of Peace

Most of *The Iliad*'s action is the work of war. Yet the epic is also consistently shot through with powerful scenes of peace. Great soaring similes compare human events to nature and keep the epic grounded in a world beyond the battlefield:

> *[A]s great flocks of winged birds,*
> *of geese or cranes or long-necked swans,*
> *in the Asian meadow amid the waters*
> *of the river Cayster,*
> *flying hither and thither exulting in their*
> *wings,*
> *ever settling, one before the other, with*
> *ringing cries, and the meadow*
> *resounds—*
> *so the many tribes of men from the ships*
> *and shelters*
> *poured forth onto the plain of Scamander…*
>
> (Book II)

Similarly, the shield that Achilles carries is decorated with scenes from peacetime:

> *And on it he made two cities of mortal*
> *men, both beautiful; and in one there*
> *were weddings and wedding feasts,*
> *and they were leading the brides from*
> *their chambers beneath the gleam*
> *of torches*
> *through the city, and loud rose the bridal*
> *song;*
> *and the young men whirled in dance…*
>
> (Book VIII)

These glimpses of peace constantly remind readers of what is at stake in war. Through such poetic artistry, the mysterious master poet called Homer transformed an ancient tale of one obscure campaign into a sublime and sweeping evocation of the devastation of every war, of any time. ■

A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC*, **CAROLINE ALEXANDER** IS AUTHOR OF *THE WAR THAT KILLED ACHILLES* (RANDOM HOUSE PENGUIN) AND AN ACCLAIMED TRANSLATION OF *THE ILIAD* (ECCO), EXCERPTS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN QUOTED IN THIS ARTICLE.

A FATHER'S PLEA
A FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. *SKYPHOS* DEPICTS KING PRIAM (LEFT) PLEADING WITH ACHILLES (RIGHT) FOR THE BODY OF HIS SON, HECTOR (BELOW). KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA
ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

AN APPEAL TO HUMANITY **King Priam of Troy approaches his enemy, the Greek Achilles, to ask for the body of his slain son, Hector:**

"Remember your father, godlike Achilles,
The same age as I, on the ruinous threshold of old age.
. . . . . .
And for his sake I come now to the ships of the Achaeans
to win [my son's] release from you, and I bear an untold ransom.
Revere the gods, Achilles, and have pity upon me ,
remembering your father, for I am yet more pitiful. . . ."
. . . . . .
So he spoke; and he stirred in the other a yearning to weep for his own father,
and taking hold of his hand, he gently pushed the old man away.

THE ILIAD, *BOOK XXIV*

OCTAVIAN

THE LAST MAN STANDING

Assuming the name Augustus in 27 B.C., the ruler formerly known as Octavian ushered Rome into a new imperial era of peace and plenty. But Octavian only reached the top after a long struggle that eliminated his rivals one man at a time.

MIGUEL ÁNGEL NOVILLO
JUAN LUIS POSADAS

AN EMPEROR'S GAZE

This detail of the "Augustus from Prima Porta" (Vatican Museums, Rome) projects the calm, patient confidence of Octavian. Opposite, the cameo brooch commemorating the assumption of his new name in 27 B.C. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

STATUE: A. DE LUCA/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES
BROOCH: AKG/ALBUM

Heir to the Empire

44 B.C.

Julius Caesar is assassinated by a group of senators alarmed by his drift toward autocracy. His will declares his great-nephew, Octavian, his heir.

42 B.C.

Rivals Octavian and Mark Antony, the two most powerful of the triumvirs, defeat the assassins of Caesar at the Battle of Philippi.

41-40 B.C.

Octavian's allies struggle for power with Antony's relatives in the Perusine War. After a siege in central Italy, Mark Antony's supporters surrender to Octavian.

39 B.C.

Sextus Pompeius cuts off Rome's food supply, and Octavian is attacked in the Forum. To buy time, Octavian cedes Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily to Sextus.

38 B.C.

Sextus's admiral Menodorus goes over to Octavian's side. Sextus declares war on the triumvirate and defeats Octavian's fleet at Messina.

36 B.C.

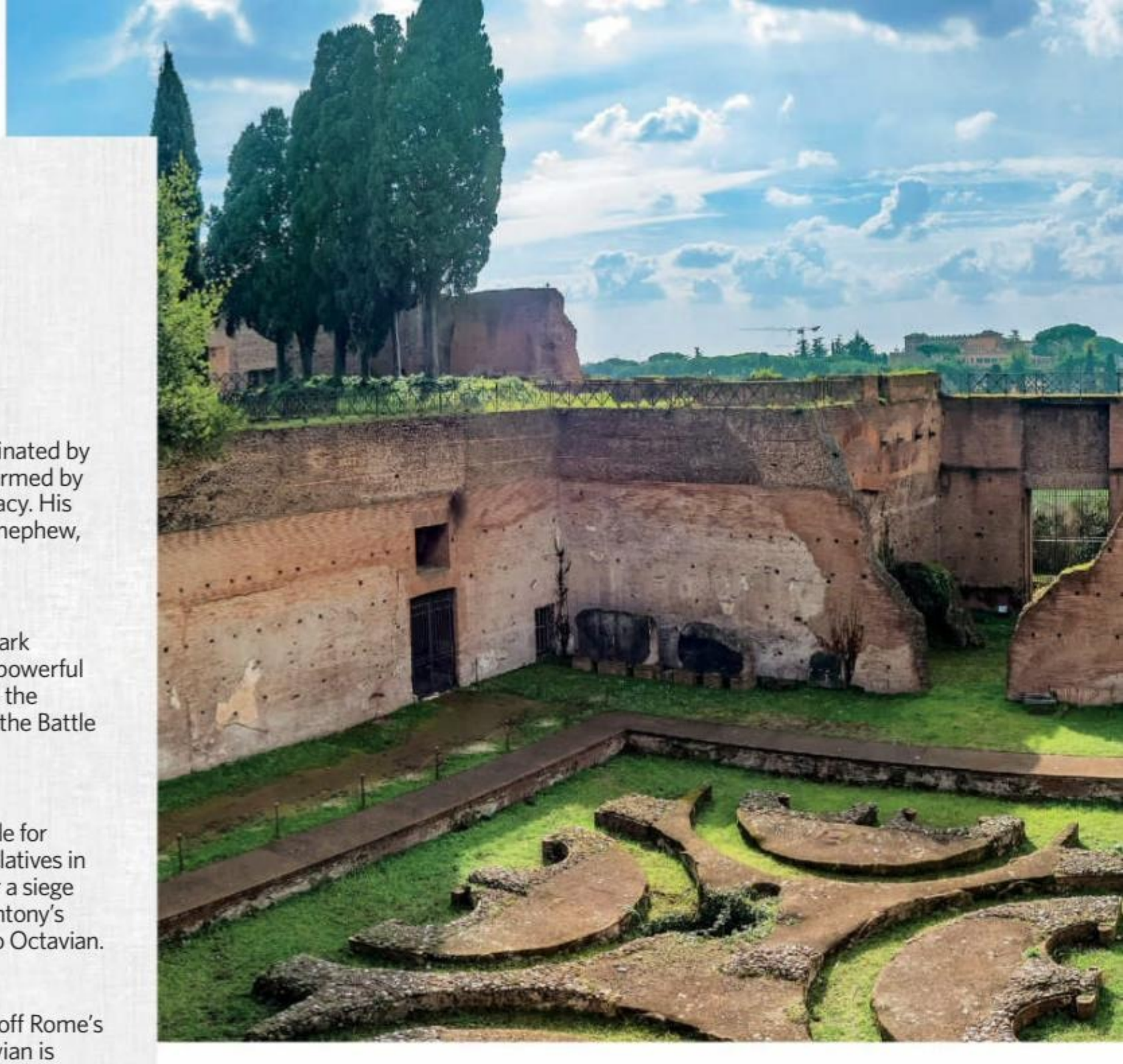
After a series of setbacks, Octavian finally manages to defeat Sextus, thanks to the leadership of Agrippa. Octavian receives an ovation in Rome.

31 B.C.

Mark Antony and Cleopatra are crushed by Octavian at the Battle of Actium, near Greece. The following year Mark Antony takes his own life.

27 B.C.

The Senate confers on Octavian the title of Augustus and sweeping new powers. From now, he is, for all intents and purposes, Rome's first emperor.



IMPERIAL AIRS
Built by Domitian in A.D. 92, the vast Domus Augustana on the Palatine Hill, flaunted its imperial Augustan title. Augustus himself took care to be rather less showy, living in a much more modest residence nearby.
FRANK BACH/ALAMY/ACI

History better remembers Octavian as Caesar Augustus, the name he took in 27 b.c. when he became the first Roman emperor. The Augustan era is synonymous with Roman peace and prosperity. One might believe that his dominance was a foregone conclusion, but his rise to power was marked by great uncertainty and threats from all sides. As he rose to power, Octavian faced a series of serious trials—military defeats, civil unrest, shattered alliances, political betrayals, and several close brushes with death—that tested his character and proved his mettle.

Born outside of Rome in 63 b.c. as Gaius Octavius, Octavian's maternal grandmother was Julius Caesar's sister, making him the dictator's great-nephew. The teenaged Octavius spent much time with his great-uncle in Spain facing the last remnants of Pompey the Great's forces. Caesar was so impressed that he made Octavius his adopted son and heir, but he neglected to tell him. Octavian would not learn of his status until after Caesar's death.

Path to Power

Following the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 b.c., Roman politics were chaotic with different factions struggling for power. Caesar's death did not save Rome from ambition and return it to a republican course, nor did it cool the desire among the Roman elite for power. Caesar's murder seemed to have ignited it. The upheaval that followed left a power vacuum, waiting to be filled by Rome's top dogs.

As Caesar's adopted son, the 20-something Octavian wanted to claim his inheritance, but his path to power was blocked by several factions, including the one led by Mark Antony. One of Caesar's most loyal generals, Antony was in his mid-40s and believed his solid record of loyalty and service made him Caesar's true heir. He controlled Rome after Caesar's death and stubbornly refused to turn over power and Caesar's inheritance to the young Octavian.

Mark Antony had appointed two of Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius, provincial governors of territories in the east. Octavian shrewdly recognized this act as a political opportunity for him; many soldiers still loyal to the late Caesar were enraged. To draw them to his side, Octavian went to war with Antony and defeated him at Modena in northern Italy in 43 b.c.

Octavian returned to Rome to demand and receive the consulship. His next move was surprising. Rather than turn against his former enemies, he teamed up with them. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus—a former general in Caesar's army—Antony, and Octavian came together to form the Second Triumvirate in November 43 b.c. This arrangement was intended to last for five years and would consolidate power among the three men.

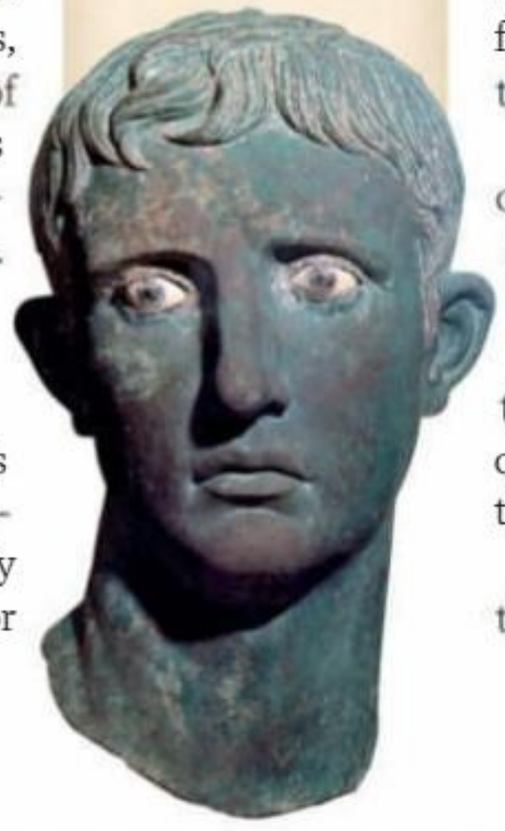
They quickly took drastic measures to root out opposition. They enacted a mass proscription of more than 200 senators, including the orator Cicero, who was executed by Antony's forces, and more than 1,000 nobles. Some of these enemies of the state were killed, while others were exiled and their property seized by the government.

To secure the continued loyalty of the army, the triumvirate gave lands to veterans of Caesar's

A POWERFUL STARE

With its inlaid eyes, this bronze head of Augustus—found in 1910 in Meroë, Sudan—captures the intense gaze of Rome's imperial ruler from 27 B.C. British Museum, London

W. FORMANIAGE FOTOSTOCK



MARRIAGE AND POWER IN ROME

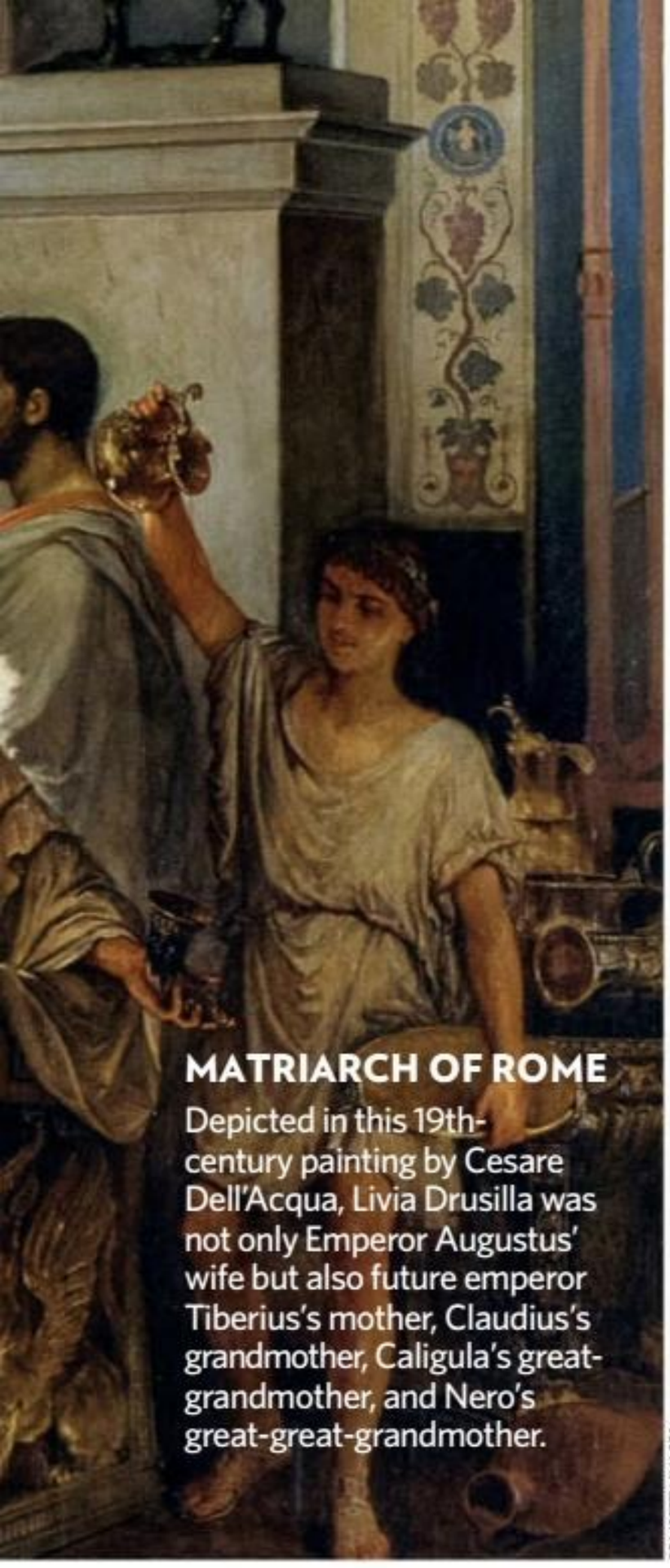
THE GAME OF LOVE

During Octavian and Mark Antony's power struggle, love and politics often mixed, with sisters and daughters used as pawns. Following Julius Caesar's assassination, Octavian married Mark Antony's stepdaughter Claudia as a sign of solidarity, which provedto be short-lived. As relations with Antony soured in 40 B.C., Octavian divorced her, "intact and a virgin" according to historian Suetonius. In an attempt to make peace with the rebel Sextus Pompeius, Octavian married Scribonia, a relative of his rival, that same year. She soon gave birth to Octavian's only legitimate child, Julia, but this marriage was also short. Octavian divorced Scribonia shortly after Julia's birth and married Livia Drusilla, a Roman noblewoman, a few months later. In 40 B.C. Octavian and Antony again tried to make a lasting alliance through marriage. The recently widowed Antony wed Octavian's sister, Octavia. In 37 B.C. Octavian betrothed his young daughter to one of Antony's sons. But their reconciliation would fail for Antony's affections proved too fickle. He shifted his loyalty from Rome to Egypt—and Queen Cleopatra—dooming his alliance with Octavian for good.

army that they had taken from private owners without compensating them for it. The triumverate formally declared war against Caesar's assassins, including Brutus and Cassius, who were finally defeated at Philippi by Antony and Octavian in 42 b.c.

The triumvirate did bring Rome together, but it failed to unite the triumvirs themselves. Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus would spend the next decade alternating between truce and war. One of the first, and most significant conflicts was the Perusine War, which was launched by Antony's wife Fulvia and his brother Lucius Antonius. Fulvia and Lucius had sided with the landowners dispossessed by the triumvirate and challenged Octavian's authority in Italy. Antony did not come to their aid, and Octavian was able to defeat them at Perusia (near modern-day Perugia, Italy) in 40 b.c., after which both were exiled.

The Treaty of Brundisium officially ended the war, and also renewed the triumvirate for another five years. It officially divided Rome's territory into differentiated sectors: the west, including Gaul, was under Octavian's control, the



MATRIARCH OF ROME
Depicted in this 19th-century painting by Cesare Dell'Acqua, Livia Drusilla was not only Emperor Augustus' wife but also future emperor Tiberius's mother, Claudius's grandmother, Caligula's great-grandmother, and Nero's great-great-grandmother.

DEA/GETTY IMAGES

east was Antony's, and Africa went to Lepidus.

To seal the treaty and a renewed alliance, there was a marriage. Fulvia's death while in exile made Antony a bachelor again, and Octavian's sister, Octavia, was widowed. Marrying the two seemed the perfect opportunity to consolidate peace between the two rivals, which the two triumvirs celebrated with ostentatious banquets. Many Romans dared to hope that peace was just around the corner.

An Outside Threat

This new start for Octavian and Antony was threatened by an outsider: Sextus Pompeius, the youngest son of Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar's great rival.

Following the assassination of Caesar, Antony gave Sextus a naval command in 44 b.c., but following the triumvirate's rise to power he was declared an outlaw. Nonetheless, Roman exiles and the dispossessed rallied to him in Sicily because they saw him as the last true republican who could prevent Rome from becoming an autocracy.

Sextus's renegade fleet had been troubling Italy from the south and successfully cut off the shipping routes transporting grain to Rome. The resulting food shortages in the capital led to discontent among the plebeians. In exchange for helping Antony with his campaigns in the east, Octavian had a free hand to finish off Sextus. He needed to do it quickly.

The starving Romans grew restless and finally ran out of patience. Riots broke out in the streets of the capital in 39 b.c. In a decision that went horribly wrong, Octavian made a personal appearance in the Forum, accompanied by just a few supporters and bodyguards, to calm the people. When the crowd saw him, they pelted Octavian with stones. Antony's soldiers were able to put down the revolt, and Octavian was led away to safety.

In view of the explosive situation, Octavian knew a diplomatic solution was the fastest and wisest course of action. Octavian and Sextus reached an agreement: the Pact of Misenum, signed that same year near Cumae, which gave Sextus three islands in the Mediterranean—

FAMILY POLITICS
This relief from the Altar of Augustan Peace in Rome depicts Octavian's close ally, Agrippa (left). The female figure to his right is thought either to be Julia—Octavian's daughter—or Octavian's third wife, Livia Drusilla, later known as Julia Augusta.

DAGLI ORTI/ART ARCHIVE

CARVING UP THE ROMAN WORLD

OUTMANEUVERED

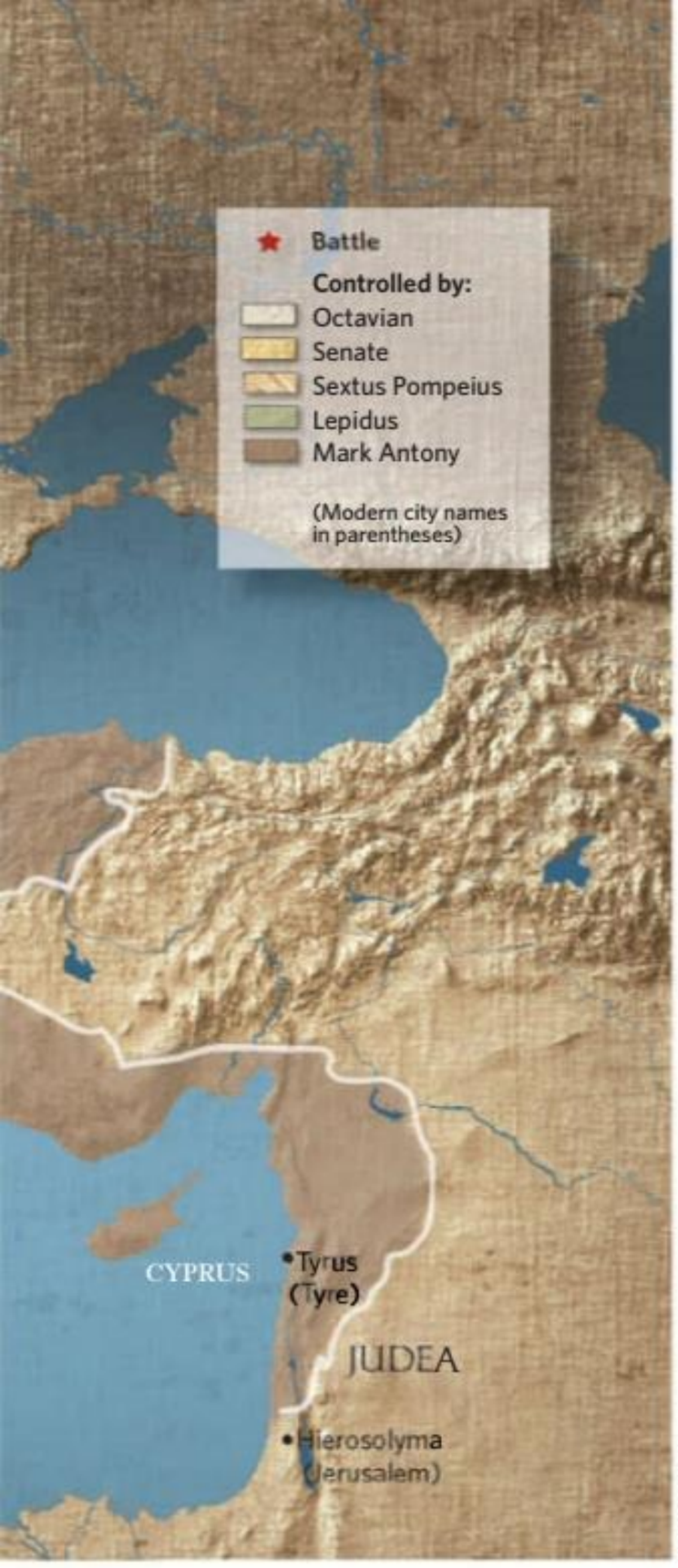
The Pact of Misenum, signed in 39 B.C. near Cumae by Sextus Pompeius and his enemies, the triumvirs Octavian, Mark Antony, and Lepidus, looked (on paper at least) to be a major coup for Sextus. The pact handed him control of Corsica, Sicily, and Sardinia—key islands from which he could control the western Mediterranean. Sextus was also made an augur and a consul. But in reality his position was weakened by the pardon granted to many of his followers, who left him because they felt safe enough to return to Rome. Some of Sextus's advisers felt that he had let an opportunity slip through his fingers. During the banquet to celebrate the treaty, Menodorus, his admiral, asked him in private whether he would not prefer to "cut the cables" and make himself "master not only of Sicily and Sardinia, but of the whole Roman empire?" Sextus thought it over and finally replied that it was more honorable to keep his word. An old-school republican who valued respect for tradition above all, Sextus did not have the same ambition as Mark Antony and Octavian, whose ruthless approach to power was already reshaping the future of the Roman world.

Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica—as well as the Peloponnesus in southern Greece. The agreement was celebrated with a succession of banquets aboard Sextus's and the triumvirs' ships.

Ruling the Waves

The good feelings between the powers did not run deep. Mutual distrust simmered beneath the surface. It didn't take long for things to boil over: The conflict started up again when Sextus's admiral Menodorus defected and returned Corsica and Sardinia to Octavian's control, prompting Sextus to resume the war.

Things started badly for Rome, and only grew worse. Sextus smashed Octavian's fleet in the Strait of Messina, forcing him to flee. Landing on the coast with a group of soldiers, Octavian spent an entire night without food or equipment. The Roman historian Appian describes how "the next morning, when Octavian looked out upon the water, he beheld some of his ships burned . . . and others broken in pieces." A storm then destroyed or disabled the remaining ships. The triumvir was forced to march through the



MAP: EOSGIS.COM

mountains at night to avoid an ambush by the enemy.

Undeterred, Octavian was determined to finish off Sextus. During the following months he devoted all of his organizational genius to preparing a campaign. He managed to ensure that his loyal friend, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, was appointed consul in 37 b.c. Agrippa then used the legal and political authority of that position to make massive preparations for the upcoming campaign against Sextus. He built a fortified double port at Cumae (near modern-day Naples). Vast numbers of trees in the surrounding area were cut down, and the wood was used to build a vast fleet for which 20,000 galley slaves were recruited.

The final act of the war took place in 36 b.c. Octavian and Agrippa were to attack Sicily from the east, and Lepidus would attack the west. Altogether, the three of them had more than 20 legions and 600 ships under their command, vastly outnumbering Sextus's forces. At first, all went according to plan: Lepidus was able to land his troops in Sicily at Lilybaeum. But Octavian's fleet had no such luck. It was once again battered by a storm and had to take refuge on the Italian coast.

Agrippa and Octavian attempted to sail for Sicily again. This time Agrippa scored a major victory against Sextus's fleet off Mylae, near Messina. Octavian, however, was not so fortunate. He lost half of his ships and only managed to land three legions on the Sicilian coast. In an effort not to lose his fleet entirely, Octavian tried to retreat but Sextus intercepted him. The naval battle that followed proved yet another disaster for Caesar's adopted son. Historians relate how Octavian entertained thoughts of suicide but was prevented from carrying them out because Proculeius, the officer who was supposed to hold the sword for him on which to fall, refused to do so.

The situation was desperate, but in one of the mercurial twists of fate that marked his career, Octavian managed to rejoin his forces, link his legions up with those of Agrippa, and take the Sicilian city of Tyndaris. Using this bridgehead on the island, Lepidus and Octavian could

NAVAL GENIUS

Octavian's admiral Agrippa clinched key victories at sea, first against Sextus in 36 B.C., and then against Mark Antony at Actium in 31, a battle depicted in this 18th-century painting by Johann Georg Platzer.

VANDA IMAGES/PHOTOAISA

MINTING AN EMPIRE

BETWEEN Caesar's dictatorship and Octavian's assumption of the name Augustus in 27 B.C., Roman coins reflect the rapidly evolving notion of the kind of power Rome was becoming. In earlier periods, coins were decorated with symbols of the city, not portraits, which were associated with the old monarchy replaced by the Roman Republic in the sixth century B.C. That attitude changed with Julius Caesar, whose visage started to appear on coinage. During the following decades, especially under Augustus, more widespread use was made of coins as an instrument of political propaganda. Symbols and honors were included in order to carefully portray the ruler not as an autocrat but as both the savior and protector of the values of the republic and its citizens.

CAMEO (ABOVE) DEPICTING THE DEIFIED AUGUSTUS OBSERVING HIS FAMILY FROM HEAVEN. A.D. 20. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

I Julius Caesar's Dictatorship (44 B.C.)

This coin was minted to commemorate Julius Caesar's proclamation as perpetual dictator. On the front, Caesar wears a laurel wreath and the text around him alludes to his new rank. On the back are the initials of the monetary triumvir of the day together with symbols of power: the caduceus, fasces, orb, and axe.

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

SILVER COIN WITH AN EFFIGY OF JULIUS CAESAR, FROM 44 B.C. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

IV Mark Antony in Asia (32 B.C.)

Mark Antony had a coin minted specifically to pay his troops in Asia. On the front of this denarius, a galley is shown alongside his titles. On the back, an eagle is surrounded by the two standards of the Seventh Legion.

AKG/ALBUM

SILVER DENARIUS MINTED IN ROME BY MARK ANTONY, 32-31 B.C. KALKRIESE MUSEUM, GERMANY

II Power Vacuum (43 B.C.)

Below is an example of a coin minted by Caesar's enemies. The front acclaims the assassin, Marcus Brutus, and bears the name of the man who minted the coin. On the back, two daggers—a clear allusion to the assassination—flank the liberty hat worn by freed slaves in Rome.

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

SILVER DENARIUS FROM 43 OR 42 B.C. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

"Brutus *Imperator*" (general) "Lucius Plaetorius Cestianus" (minter)

Portrait of Marcus Brutus

Two daggers and liberty hat

"Ides of March"

III Political Marriage (40 B.C.)

This coin from Pergamum (in modern-day Turkey) commemorates the marriage of Mark Antony and Octavia. On the front is the groom, crowned with a vine wreath: On the back, a chest, associated with Pergamum, holds up a bust of Octavia flanked by snakes.

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

SILVER CISTOPHORUS (COIN FROM PERGAMUM) OF MARK ANTONY, COINED IN 40 B.C. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

"*Imperator* (general) and consul for the second and third time"

Effigy of Mark Antony

Effigy of Octavia

Triumvir of the republic

V The Peace of Octavian (28 B.C.)

Presenting Octavian as a harbinger of peace was an important propaganda tool. On the front, he is crowned with a laurel wreath. The back shows the goddess of peace, and a chest associated with Pergamum, where this coin was minted.

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

SILVER CISTOPHORUS OF AUGUSTUS, MINTED IN 28 B.C. IN PERGAMUM. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

Effigy of Octavian

"Protector of the freedom of the Roman people"

The goddess of peace

VI The Conquest of Egypt (27 B.C.)

After the defeat of Mark Antony at Actium, Egypt became a province of the empire. In 27 B.C. Augustus minted a gold coin to commemorate the conquest, fronted by his own head and titles. A hippopotamus on the back represents Egypt.

ASF/ALBUM

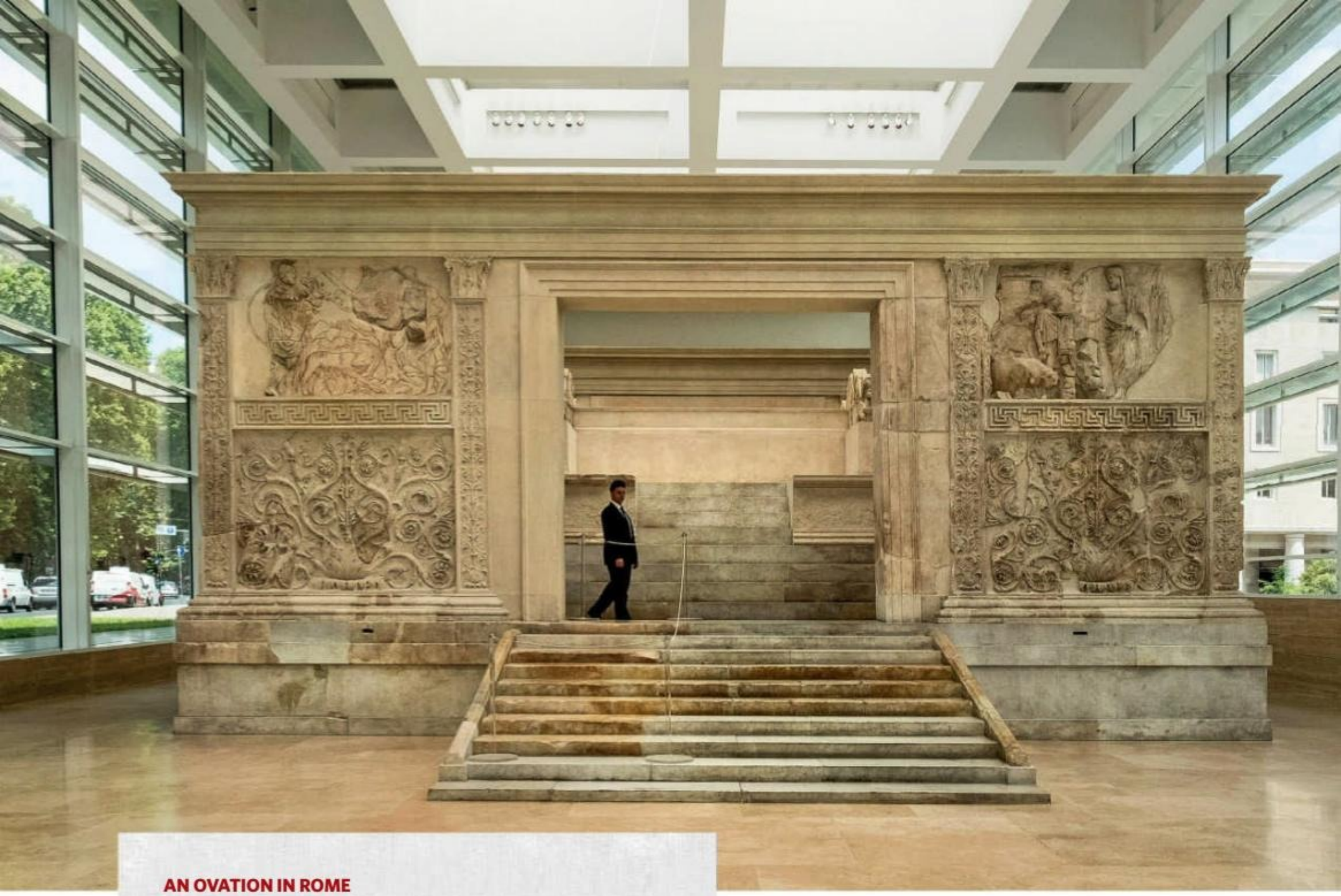
AUREUS MINTED BY AUGUSTUS, 27 B.C. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, MADRID

"Augustus, consul for the seventh time . . . *Imperator*, son of the divine Caesar"

Effigy of Augustus

Hippopotamus representing the land of the Nile

"Egypt conquered"



AN OVATION IN ROME

A LESSER TRIUMPH

Octavian's propaganda presented the conflict with Sextus in Sicily as a lesser, "servile war," on account of the tens of thousands of slaves in Sextus's army. The strategy later backfired following Octavian's victory, because it denied him a triumph—the magnificent procession through the streets of Rome in which homage was paid to victorious generals. Instead, he had to make do with the less elaborate ceremony known as an ovation. Ovations were given in Rome when war had not been declared between enemy states, if the rival was considered inferior, or if fewer than 5,000 enemies had been killed. Unlike a triumph, the general who received an ovation walked the streets of Rome instead of riding on a chariot. He wore the toga *praetexta* (a toga with a purple border) and a crown of myrtle instead of a toga *picta* (a full purple toga embroidered with gold) and the triumphator's laurel wreath. Instead of trumpeters, he was accompanied by flute players, and neither senators nor soldiers took part in the ceremony. The procession ended at the Capitol, where the general receiving the ovation sacrificed a sheep (*ovis* in Latin) to the god Jupiter, hence the term "ovation."

unite the bulk of their forces and finally corner Sextus near Messina. Sextus tried to break out with his ships but suffered a heavy defeat at Naulochus, near Messina. It was Agrippa who decided the strategy, since Octavian had fallen ill that day, as he often did at times of crisis. Appian wrote that Antony mocked him: "You were unable to take a clear view of the fleet, when drawn up in line of battle, but lay stupidly upon your back, gazing at the sky." Despite the jibes from Antony, Octavian had secured a great victory over Sextus and neutralized one of his biggest threats.

And Then There Were Two

The remaining threats to Octavian's power lay somewhat closer to home. Having persuaded Sextus's troops to hand Messina over to him and join his side, Lepidus found himself commanding almost 22 legions. His newfound military strength gave him the confidence to believe he was strong enough to challenge and defeat Octavian. Trying to take a larger slice of the triumviral pie, Lepidus demanded control over Sicily

ALTERED STATE
DEDICATED IN 9 B.C., SCENES FROM ROMAN LEGENDS ADORN THE ALTAR OF AUGUSTAN PEACE IN ROME, A STATEMENT IN MARBLE OF THE STABILITY AND POWER OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

as well as Africa—effectively taking Sextus's place in control of the Mediterranean.

Octavian presented himself at Lepidus's camp to win over his army with a speech—but was almost killed when a spear was thrown at him. Despite this indignity, fortune again was with Octavian, and Lepidus's brief moment of glory sputtered out. The arrival of Octavian's army persuaded Lepidus's forces to switch their loyalties to Octavian. All Lepidus could do was beg his fellow triumvir to show mercy. Stripped of meaningful office, Lepidus was packed off to a comfortable exile, and the triumvirate was then down to two.

Despite an apparently irreversible series of misfortunes, Octavian had pulled off a breathtaking comeback. He could now pursue his occasional ally and long-standing rival, Antony. Having divorced Octavia in 32 b.c. to continue his relationship with Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt, the soldier-ruler had lost influence in the center of the Roman world. Octavian declared war on Cleopatra and, aided by Agrippa, chalked up victories against her in Greece. The couple's forces were finally routed at the Battle of Actium in 31 b.c., and Antony's suicide a year later left Octavian as Rome's sole master.

When in 27 b.c. he styled himself as Augustus, he marked a great before and after in Rome's already long history. The new name was carefully chosen to reflect a dual meaning in Latin—to augment and to augur—and was intended to convey his majesty.

He had already proven his capacity to dazzle, when following his victory over Sextus, a column was erected in his honor in the Forum, adorned with the prows of Sextus's ships. The inscription read: "Peace, long disturbed, he re-established on land and sea." There was no mention of the war involved in restoring that peace, nor the repression he unleashed to maintain his grip on power. But after so much upheaval, Rome was now ready to enjoy the fruits of the Augustan age and the stability that followed. ■

HISTORIANS **MIGUEL ÁNGEL NOVILLO** AND **JUAN LUIS POSADAS** TEACH HISTORY AT THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LA RIOJA, SPAIN.

THE REIGN OF ART AND PEACE

The 18th-century admiration for Augustus is reflected in this painting by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, showing Maecenas, Augustus' close friend, presenting him to the liberal arts. Ca 1745. Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

PORTRAIT OF A PIONEER
Captain Cook, painted by Nathaniel Dance in 1776. His face—one of his colleagues wrote—was "full of expression, his nose exceedingly well-shaped, his eyes, which were small and of a brown cast, were quick and piercing." Above right, an engraving of an Australian parrot from a 1790 book co-edited by Frederick Nodder, who had contributed to Cook's botanical works.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

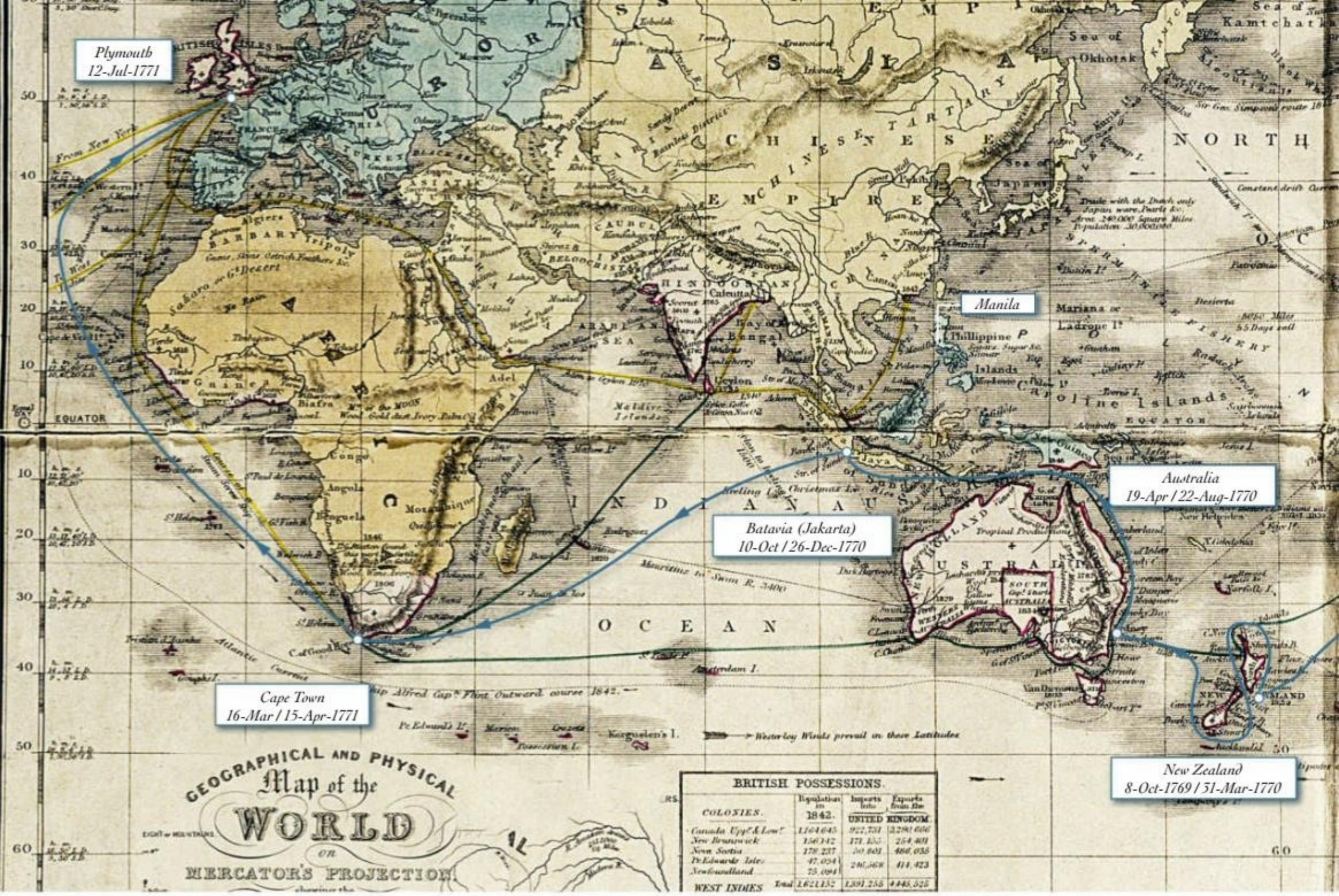
ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

On His Majesty's Secret Service

COOK'S FIRST ENDEAVOR

In 1768 James Cook and his crew embarked on a secret royal mission to uncharted territory in the South Pacific aboard the *Endeavour*. The mission's stated purpose was scientific observation, but its undercover aim was to find—and claim—an undiscovered continent.

JOSÉ MARÍA LANCHO



MAPPING OUT AN EMPIRE

Captain Cook's first voyage laid the groundwork for the 19th-century British Empire, as shown in the map above, engraved by Smith Evans in 1851.

ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, LONDON, UK
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

The exploration of the Pacific was one of the greatest adventures of the Enlightenment. After Magellan had crossed the vast ocean in 1521, for the rest of the 16th century it became a "Spanish Lake," a mare clausum— a body of water closed off to other powers. Many Spanish navigators began mapping out the geography of the South Seas and the myriad islands and archipelagoes they found there. At the beginning of the 17th century the Spaniards were joined by Dutch and, sporadically, English sailors such as Dampier, a corsair. However, it was in the middle of the 18th century that European powers, especially France and Great Britain, raced to occupy the unexplored parts of that vast region.

In the final third of the 18th century several epoch-making expeditions to the Pacific were led by Bougainville and La Pérouse from France, Malaspina and Bustamante from Spain, and Wallis and James Cook from Britain. Cook went on three great voyages around the world, the last of which was cut short by his tragic death in Hawaii. He, better than anyone,

GRANGER/ALBUM

CHRONOMETER USED BY COOK ON HIS SECOND VOYAGE. 1772. ROYAL SOCIETY, LONDON

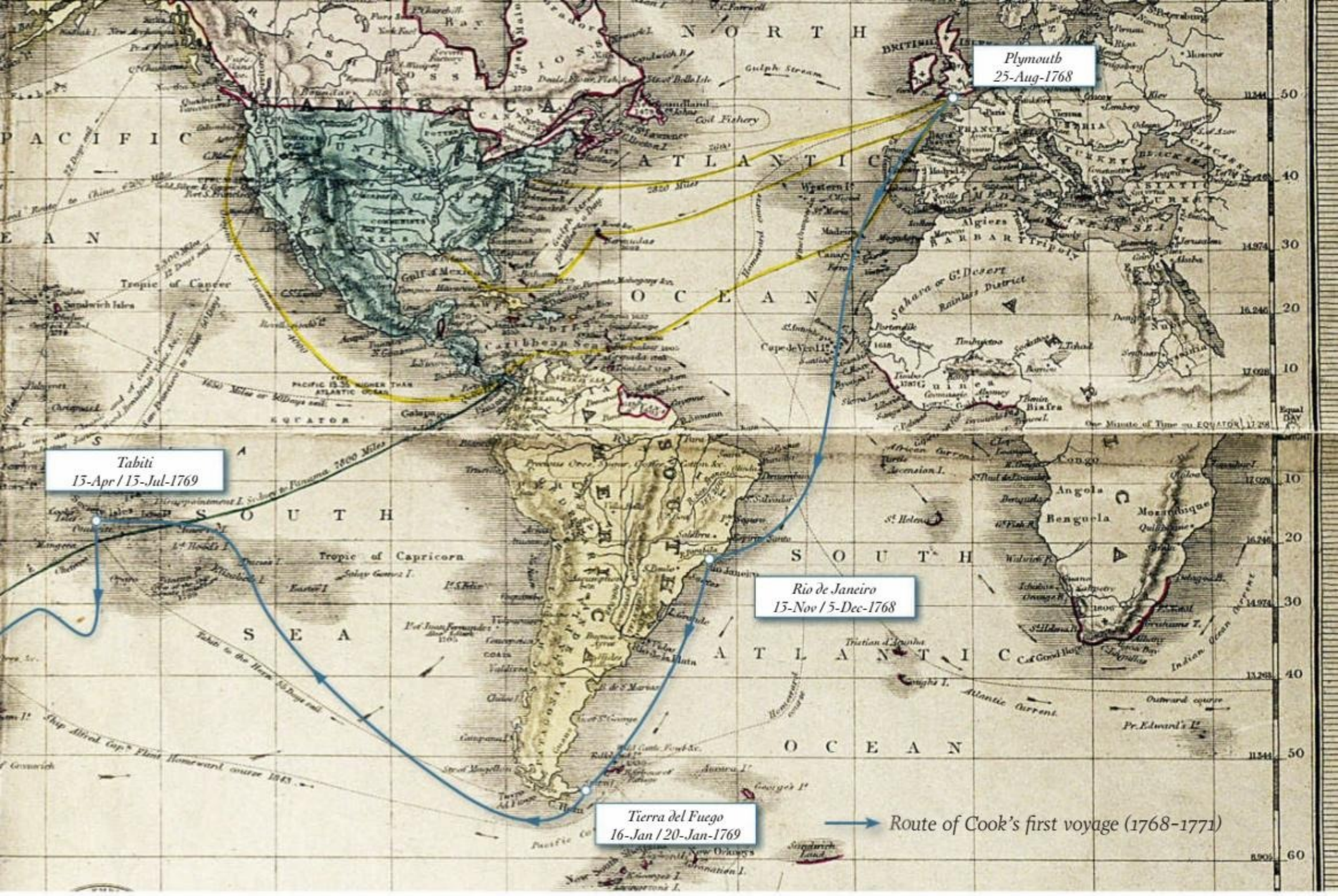
CAPTAIN COOK'S FIRST VOYAGE

1767

Alexander Dalrymple informs the Admiralty of his proposal to travel in search of the Austral continent based on Spanish maps from Manila.

1768

James Cook is put in command of an expedition to observe the transit of Venus from the South Pacific and then continue southward in search of the Austral continent.



embodied the spirit of that generation of explorers with his mix of tenacity, courage, scientific endeavor, and great openness to the diversity of the human and natural worlds.

Cook's expedition had its origin in an often overlooked episode. In 1762 Manila, the capital of the Spanish Philippines, was captured by the British. Scottish geographer, spy, and diplomat Alexander Dalrymple gained access to scores of Spanish documents kept in the city, providing him with more than 200 years of intelligence on Pacific navigation by the Spanish.

In the 18th century many Europeans still believed that there was a large undiscovered continent—Terra Australis—in the Southern Hemisphere. Dalrymple is on the record imagining that it could be at least 5,000 miles wide with 50 million inhabitants. He claimed that "the scraps from this table would be sufficient to maintain the power, dominion, and sovereignty of Britain by employing all its manufacturers and ships." So Dalrymple must have paid particular attention to the reports of navigators such as Fernández de Quirós who, on his crossing of the West Pacific, thought he had reached Terra Australis (it is actually possible he might have sighted the north coast of Australia).

NATIVE VISIONS

This wooden statuette of Captain Cook was made by the Maori of the islands that would be named for him: the Cook Islands. Pacific Museum of Art, Glasgow

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

1769

Cook's ship, **the *Endeavour,*** rounds Cape Horn and then ventures to Tahiti, where the crew observes the transit of Venus. After reaching New Zealand, Cook mistakenly thinks he has landed on the Austral continent.

1770

Cook sails along the eastern coast of Australia and runs aground on a coral reef. The *Endeavour* eventually makes it to shore to be repaired. Cook claims the territory for Britain and names it **New South Wales.**

1771

Returning to England, the expedition is ravaged by disease, but the *Endeavour* brings back **30,000 items,** including plants, animals, drawings, maps, and objects, from Cook's mission.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND

ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE

Dalrymple (shown in a portrait attributed to John Thomas Seton, above), was an ambitious man of many talents. He was disappointed when the Admiralty chose Cook rather than him. National Museums Scotland

SCOTTISH SPY

THE BRAINS BEHIND THE VOYAGE

Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808) was a Scottish geographer, historian, statesman, and spy. As a youth, he worked for the East India Company. In the company's name, Dalrymple briefly served as governor of Manila after the capital of the Philippines was conquered by the British during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). While there, Dalrymple sought information about Pacific geography and cultures gathered by the Spanish. He scoured the city's archives, especially the library in the Convent of San Pablo, which had been pillaged by the British. A document he obtained there was the *Memorial de Arias*, an account of the 1576 voyage of Juan Fernández, a Spanish captain. Starting from Chile, Fernández followed a latitude of 40° south, and reached land that Dalrymple believed to be the Austral continent. Fernández's account also described the strait between New Guinea and Australia that Luis Vaez de Torres later sailed through in 1606. Maps and accounts such as the Spaniard Fernández de Quirós and the logs of the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman were the main sources for what became Cook's voyage.

When he arrived in London after Manila was returned to Spain, Dalrymple wasted no time in trying to persuade the British Admiralty on the need of sending an expedition to explore the South Pacific to search for new lands based on the information gained from the Spanish. Among Dalrymple's backers were the British economist Adam Smith and American polymath Benjamin Franklin, who was then living in London. The project was supported by both the Admiralty and the Royal Society, the country's leading scientific institution. As a cover for this colonial mission, a scientific goal of observing the transit of Venus from somewhere in the South Pacific was the stated purpose of the expedition.

Although the Admiralty enthusiastically embraced Dalrymple's project, they soon realized that the former governor of Manila could not command a supposedly scientific expedition through Spanish domains. (Dalrymple was offered another position on the ship, but the disappointed Scotsman refused.) The navy needed a replacement.

Their choice was somewhat surprising. Nearing 40 years of age, James Cook was not yet a lieutenant. He had never been to the South Seas, nor had he captained a ship. Born in 1728 in a small village in Yorkshire, Cook moved to the coast, settling in Whitby in his teens. There he held a three-year apprenticeship on merchant ships, during which he studied mathematics, navigation, and astronomy. In his late 20s he enlisted in the Royal Navy. When he sailed to North America in 1758, he gained valuable experience in surveying and charting coastal waters. By the 1760s Cook's position in the navy was

> The secret instructions for the voyage said, "If you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty."

VENUS FROM TAHITI
In 1769 Cook set up equipment to observe the transit of Venus. Cook and the ship's astronomer, Charles Green, both recorded the event on June 3. Mount Rotui on the island of Moorea, shown here, was a secondary observation point for the mission.

MATTEO COLOMBO/AWL IMAGES

fairly unique. He was one of the few who successfully came up from the bottom.

To the British, Cook's mapmaking skills and his lack of confrontations with the Spanish were attractive qualities. Before he joined the navy, Cook had also sailed a simple collier, the kind of ship that Dalrymple had proposed for the expedition. The ship, the now famous *Endeavour,* was a modest size, just 368 tons, allowing it to pass for a bark, but it had a large storage capacity and was exceptionally stable and strong. Cook was hastily promoted to lieutenant and given command of the mission.

Setting Sail

Cook's crew was composed of 94 men, including 10 civilians. Most of them were experienced sailors. On the scientific side, the Royal Society proposed Charles Green to direct the astronomical observations. He had been the assistant of Dr. Bradley, the Royal astronomer. The navy also sought

A BOTANIST ON BOARD

Joseph Banks, a naturalist and botanist, joined Cook's expedition in 1768. Below, this 1820 commemorative medal from the Royal Horticultural Society bears his likeness.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

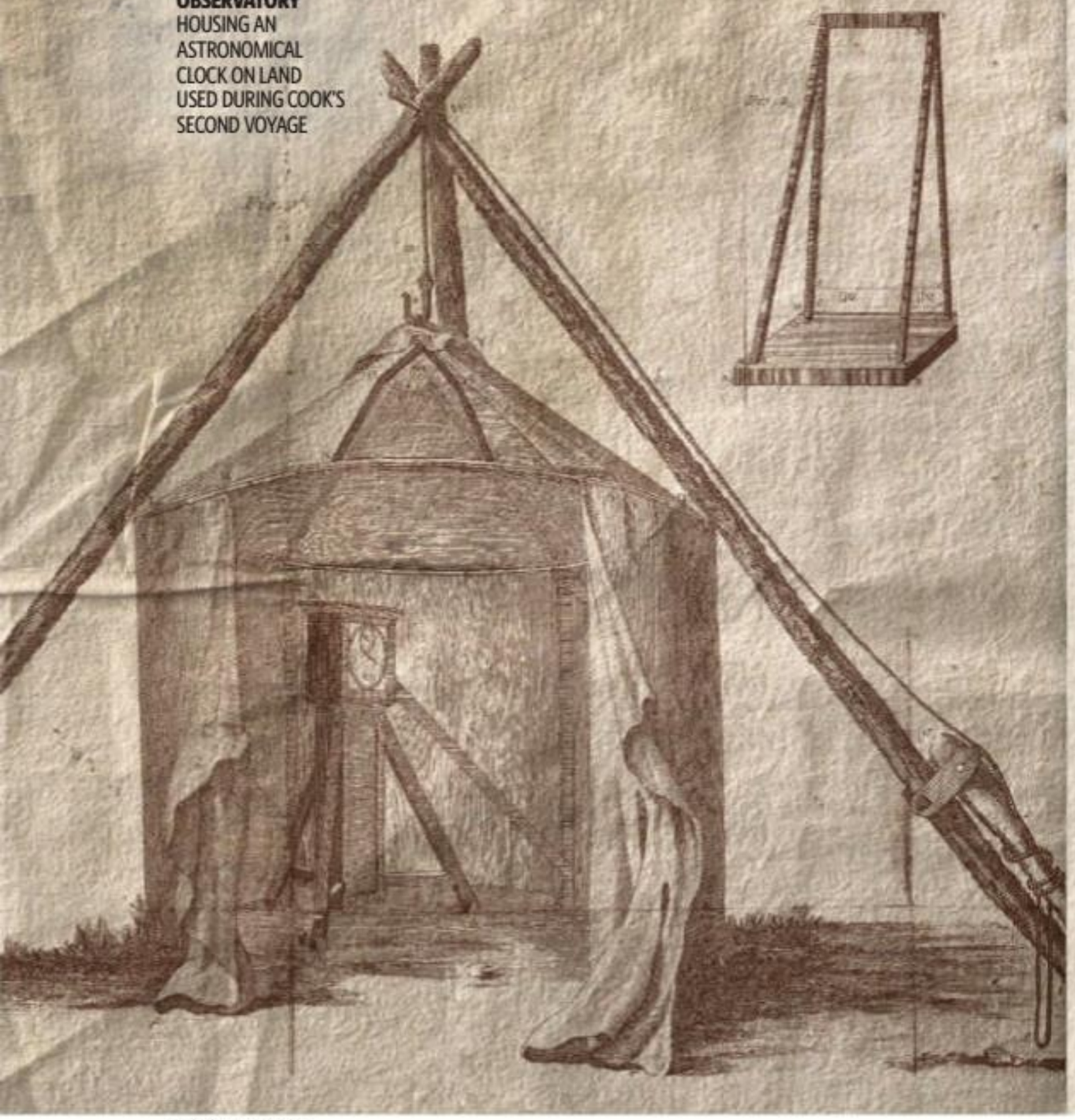
out Joseph Banks, an erudite young man with whom Cook had previously worked and who had already taken part in long, exploratory journeys. The return of another expedition, headed by Captain Wallis, determined what Captain Cook's first secret destination was to be: the island of Tahiti, discovered by Wallis on his voyage. It was there that the astronomical observations were to take place.

The ship left Deptford on July 21, 1768, loaded with enough supplies for the 18 months the voyage was supposed to take. James Cook had been handed secret instructions setting out the voyage's confidential political goals: he was to search for Terra Australis at a latitude of 40º south, as the Spanish reports had stated, and take possession of any land he discovered. The final instruction commanded him: "You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty

PLANTS AND STINGRAYS

Botany Bay was initially called Stingray Harbour by Cook because of "the great quantity of these sort of fish found in this place." Later on, Cook considered that "the great quantity of plants" was more noteworthy, and the name Botany Bay seemed fitting. It was later renowned as a landing point for the Australian penal colony.

PHILLIP HAYSON/GETTY IMAGES



A PORTABLE OBSERVATORY HOUSING AN ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK ON LAND USED DURING COOK'S SECOND VOYAGE

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

DATA SETS

THE TROUBLESOME TRANSIT OF VENUS

The stated goal of the *Endeavour*'s mission was to observe the transit of Venus across the sun. These events happen in pairs, each transit separated by about eight years. Approximately 120 years will pass before the next pair occurs. Efforts to record the transit in 1761 had failed so 1769 would be astronomers' last chance for more than a century. In the 17th century astronomers such as Edmund Halley suggested that if one could measure the exact length of the transit from different places on Earth, it would then be possible to calculate the distance between the sun and the Earth. The British scientific authorities set up a string of observation points, including one in Tahiti. Charles Green, the *Endeavour's* astronomer, arranged the observation, which took place on June 3,1769. The sky was clear, but a phenomenon called the black drop effect made precise measurements impossible. But Cook and Green were not alone. The effect caused problems for observers all over the world and yielded data too poor for Halley's calculations. It was not until the next pair of transits in the 19th century that the transit would be accurately documented by using photography.

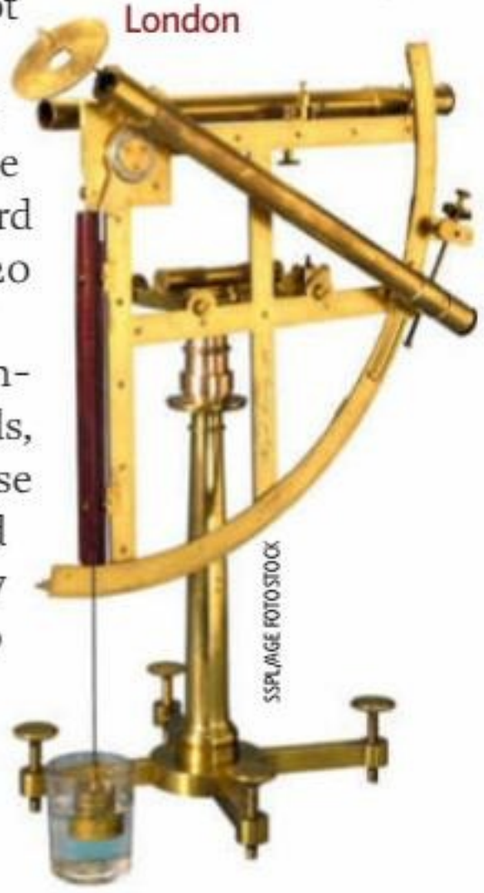
by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors."

After stopping off at Plymouth, the *Endeavour* left England on August 25, 1768. There was a troubled stop at Madeira, where a sailor drowned. After they crossed the Equator on October 25, they celebrated with the tradition of "baptizing" the sailors who had never before traveled over the Equator. Cook described the event in his journal: "Every one that could not prove upon the Sea Chart that he had before Crossed the Line was either to pay a Bottle of Rum or be Duck'd in the Sea, which former case was the fate of by far the Greatest part on board . . . this Ceremony was performed on about 20 or 30, to the no small Diversion of the Rest."

After a stopover in Rio de Janeiro (where another sailor drowned) and the Falkland Islands, the *Endeavour* rounded Cape Horn with ease thanks to the exceptionally good weather and moderate wind. However, the six days they were supposed to stop in Tierra del Fuego put their endurance to the test. Although the Admiralty had supplied them with special equipment for the cold, including Magellan jackets made of a woolen fabric called fearnought, Joseph Banks almost lost his life due to exposure. Two of his servants froze to death during an overnight on land.

STARGAZING TECHNOLOGY

Cook used a portable astronomical quadrant like this one, made in London circa 1768, to measure the transit of Venus in Tahiti. Science Museum, London



SSPL/MGE FOTOSTOCK

The Land of Venus

Once they had reached the Pacific Ocean, Cook set course for Tahiti. Wallis and Bougainville had visited this Polynesian archipelago shortly before, as Cook's men could immediately tell because the natives made a show of owning several European-made items such as axes. Unlike Wallis, Cook followed his orders to "endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with [the Natives]." The sailors interpreted this quite literally; no sooner had they gone ashore than they were infatuated with the native women and pursuing them. Cook tried to restrain his crew, but his own descriptions of Tahitian customs show that he himself was not unaffected by temptation. As for Banks, in his

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM/ALBUM

account he spoke of the fascination he felt upon reaching an island where "love is the principal occupation."

While in Tahiti, the British scientists collected data about the island. They made drawings of the island's flora and fauna and collected examples of insects, plants, and minerals for the London academies' collections. Observing the natives' customs, they soon realized that earlier accounts had underestimated their sophistication. The Tahitians' maritime knowledge particularly impressed the British explorers, which led them to ask about Terra Australis. They convinced one of the locals to join the expedition to act as their interpreter.

The scientists observed the transit of Venus from Tahiti on June 3, 1769. A little more than a month later, Cook left Tahiti to carry out the rest of his mission to find the Austral continent. A fierce storm made them fear they would have no sails left to return to England with. One night, the draftsman on board recorded that the ship turned so violently the furniture flew through the air. The sailors feared they would be thrown from their hammocks. Nevertheless, when the weather permitted, Cook resumed their southerly course. They finally sighted land on October 8, just after passing 40° south latitude. They had arrived in New Zealand, the western part of which had been discovered by the Dutch more than a century earlier in 1642.

Going South

Cook and his men landed at what they called Poverty Bay because it spectacularly failed to meet their expectations. Unlike Tahiti, this place was an inhospitable place inhabited by

LIFE IN THE SOUTH SEAS

William Hodges joined Cook's second expedition (1772-75) and painted many scenes of peoples in Oceania, such as the two war canoes shown above. National Maritime Museum, London

During one storm, the draftsman recorded, the ship turned so violently that the furniture flew through the air.

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

Fierce creature

Wolf's mask used in rituals on Nootka Island. This animal was regarded as the Lord of Death and appears in various tales. Ethnographic Museum, Berlin

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Battle armor

This wooden armor decorated with human faces, which was brought back from Cook's third voyage, comes from the northwest coast of North America. Archaeological Museum, Cambridge

SCALA, FLORENCE

Seal boat

A wooden seal-shaped recipient was made by the Chugach, Alaskan native people. British Museum, London

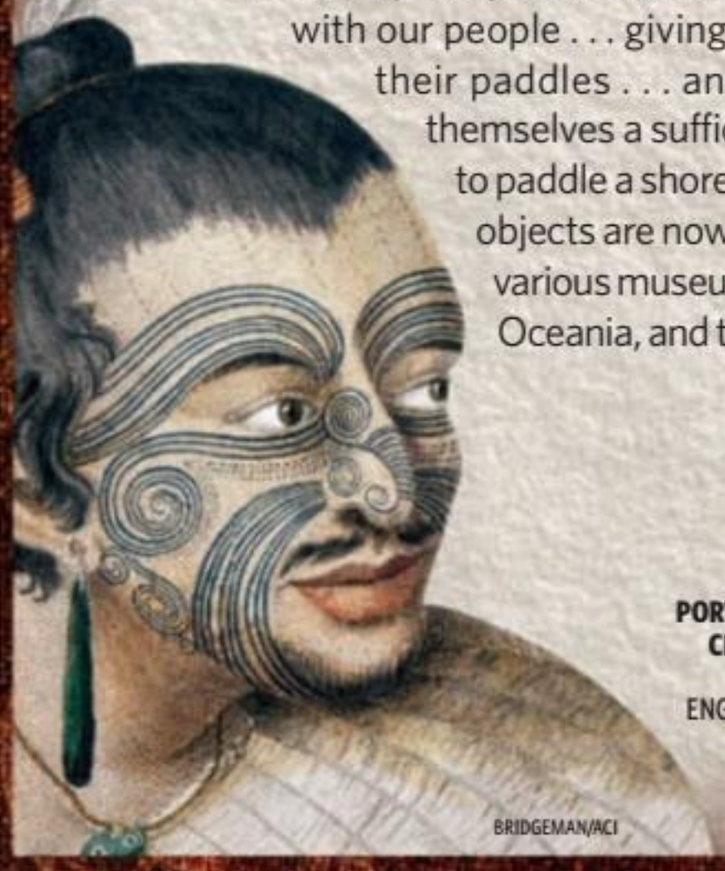
Captain Cook's Souvenirs

DURING HIS THREE EXPEDITIONS, Cook and the scientists who went with him collected countless items from the Pacific Islanders. They were often gifts from native chiefs as a sign of friendship and welcome. For example, Cook himself noted that on his arrival at Tahiti they "very soon enter'd into a traffick with our people . . . giving in exchange their paddles . . . and hardly left themselves a sufficient number to paddle a shore." All of these objects are now on display in various museums in Europe, Oceania, and the Americas.

SCALA, FLORENCE

Exchange paddle

This object decorated with ritual symbols was given as a gift to the members of the Tlingit elite on the northwest coast of North America. Academia de Ciencias, Lisbon



BRIDGEMAN/ACI

PORTRAIT OF A MAORI CHIEF WITH A FACIAL TATTOO. COLOR ENGRAVING BY SYDNEY PARKINSON, 1769

SCALA, FLORENCE

Straw headdress

This object from Hawaii was brought back from James Cook's third and last voyage (1776-1780). Academy of Sciences, Lisbon

War paddle

The New Zealand Maori's wakas (war canoes) were propelled with decorated paddles like this one, which Cook collected in 1769. British Museum, London

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Fishing hook

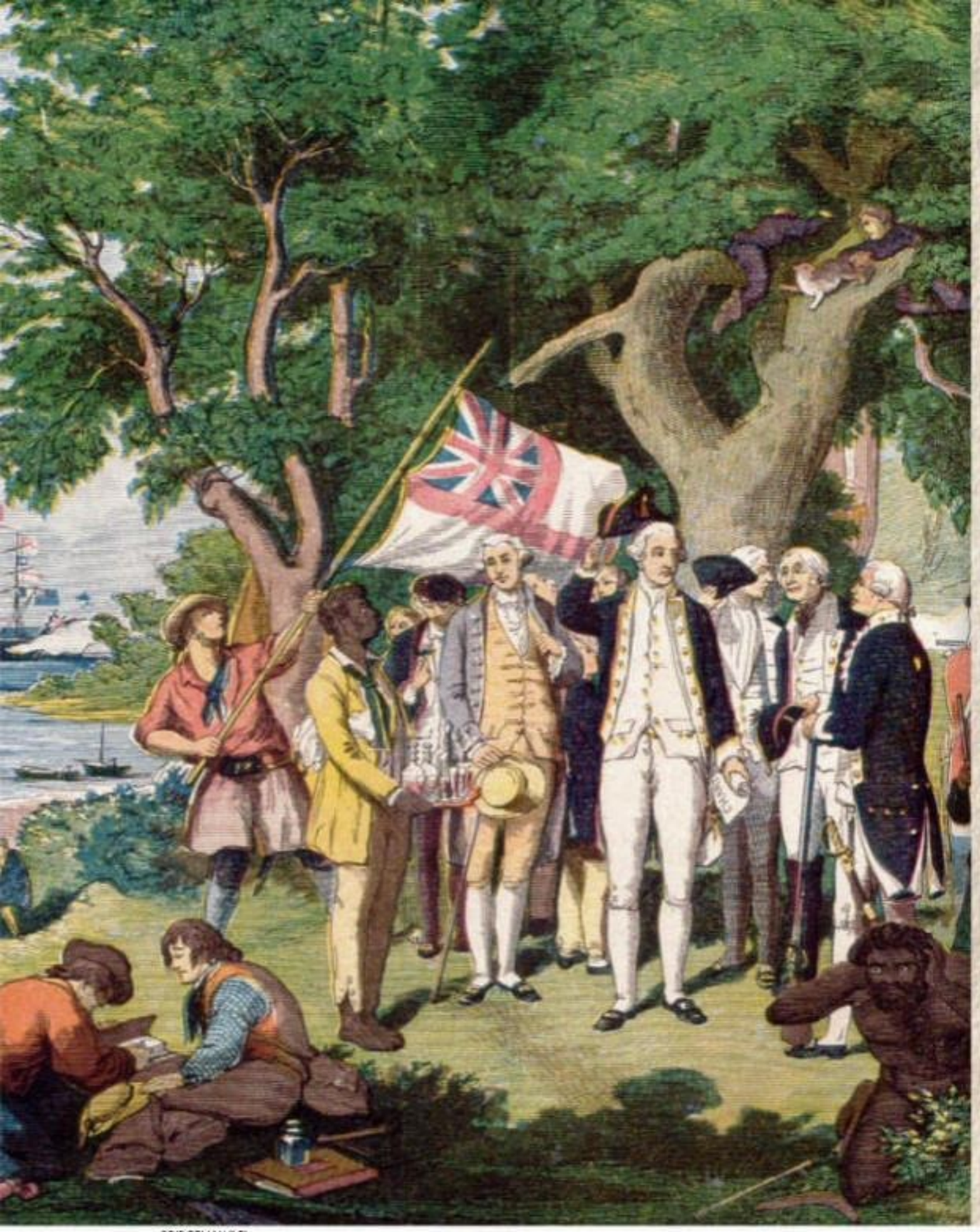
Used to fish, this object from New Zealand is made of wood, bone, and plant fibers Te Papa Tongarewa Museum, Wellington, New Zealand

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Warm welcome

On his first voyage Cook and his men were greeted and well treated by the indigenous people of Tahiti, especially a priest, Tupaia, who accompanied them on the rest of their voyage and alerted them to possible attacks. Engraving by Isaac Robert Cruikshank for a 19th-century edition of *The Voyages of Captain Cook*.



BRIDGEMAN/ACI

BRITISH AUSTRALIA

The above engraving re-creates the moment when James Cook took possession of Australia in the name of the British crown in 1770. Engraving by Samuel Calvert. *Illustrated Sydney News Supplement*, December 1865

COOK'S OTHER VOYAGES

FROM GLORY TO TRAGEDY

After the resounding success of the *Endeavour* voyage, James Cook rested just a few months before setting sail again on his second expedition. He took the *Resolution,* a collier similar to the *Endeavour*, but this time it was accompanied by another, lighter ship, the *Adventure.* Cook skirted Africa and headed for the Pacific. After stopping off at New Zealand, he went to a latitude of 70° south, beyond the Antarctic polar circle, which finally convinced him that there was no Terra Australis all the way to the South Pole (Antarctica was first sighted in 1820). A team of 16 scientists carried out even more extensive research than on the first voyage. After he returned to England in 1775, he was promoted to captain and accepted as a member of the Royal Society. At this point, Cook could have enjoyed a peaceful retirement but chose not to. One year later he set off on another global sea voyage. His goal this time was to find a northern sea passage between the Pacific and the Atlantic. His stop at Hawaii resulted in a fatal skirmish with the indigenous people during which Cook and four members of his crew perished along with some 30 natives.

people hostile to strangers. Encounters with the inhabitants resulted in several deaths among the natives, although some groups, placated by gifts, became more welcoming over time. Cook took possession of the territory by engraving the ship's name and the date on a tree and then raising the British flag on it. Cook spent the next four months exploring and mapping the territory, which enabled him to prove that New Zealand was not part of Terra Australis but instead belonged to a separate system of islands. So the search for the "missing" continent would continue.

On March 31 the *Endeavour* left New Zealand, heading west at 40° south latitude. In spite of merciless storms, the ship persevered. On April 19, 1770, Cook sighted land again—the southeastern coast of Australia. The Dutch and Portuguese had already sailed along the west and southern coasts. Cook probably realized at this point that the search for Terra Australis was in vain: The mythical continent did not exist, at least not "northward of latitude 40° S;" he wrote in his log, "of what may lie farther to the southward than 40° I can give no opinion . . . As to myself I saw nothing that I thought a sign of land, in my rout either to the northward, southward or westward."

On April 29 Cook went ashore and named the area Stingray Harbour because of the creatures they caught there. Later they renamed it Botany Bay due to the scientists collecting large numbers of animal and plant specimens there.

Cook continued to sail along the

Scientists collected a large number of specimens in Australia's Botany Bay.

BREADFRUIT. *CAPTAIN COOK'S VOYAGES, 1773*

GRANGER/ALBUM

SIMON GROSSET/ALAMY/ACI

Australian coastline. When they explored on land, the native Aborigines shied away from making contact. On June 11 the ship ran aground on a coral reef, which tore open a hole in the keel. The entire crew, including Cook, took turns manning the pumps to keep the ship afloat. To lighten the ship's weight, they tossed much of their artillery, water barrels, and firewood overboard. A clever officer suggested fothering the ship and fashioned a large sail of oakum and wool. The sail was dragged under the ship to cover the hole. The patch allowed the *Endeavour* to reach land where it could be more fully repaired.

The *Endeavour* continued as far as Torres Strait. On August 22, 1770, on a rocky promontory called Possession Island, Cook claimed the entire east coast of the Australian continent in the name of King George III, in spite of the Admiralty's instructions prohibiting him from claiming inhabited land without the inhabitants' consent. He named the territory New South Wales.

Triumphant Return

The return to Europe was slow and difficult. Up until then, Cook had managed to keep most of the crew in good shape with a diet rich in vegetables to prevent scurvy. However, when they stopped at Batavia (now Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia), many of the sailors fell ill and died of malaria and dysentery. After they set sail again, the *Endeavour* had just half a dozen fit sailors left and struggled to reach Cape Town on March 16, 1771. Cook had to recruit several Portuguese sailors there to continue. Cook's journals say the ship finally anchored in England on July 13, 1771, after a voyage of almost three years.

Cook's feat was celebrated in Britain as a great national triumph. Lord Sandwich paid John Hawkesworth, a fashionable writer, £6,000 (more than the *Endeavour* itself cost) to write an epic account of the voyage based on Cook's logs. Cook became an exemplary hero who embodied Britain's imperial destiny. ■

AN EXPERT IN MARITIME HISTORY AND LAW, **JOSÉ MARÍA LANCHO** HAS WRITTEN NUMEROUS ARTICLES ON EUROPEAN NAVAL EXPANSION.

A SHIP BY ANY OTHER NAME

The *Endeavour* (seen above as a replica) was first launched as the *Earl of Pembroke* in 1764. By the time it was scuttled near Rhode Island in 1778, it had been renamed the *Lord Sandwich*.

THE LITTLE SHIP THAT COULD

At 105 feet in length and 368 tons in weight, the *Endeavour* seemed scarcely worth noticing when seen beside the imposing warships that crisscrossed the Atlantic at that time, which were as much as 10 times heavier. But its resistance and handling made it ideal for a voyage of exploration like Cook's.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

LOST CANNONS. In 1770, on its return to Europe, the *Endeavour* ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef to the east of Australia. Cook ordered the crew to throw 48 tons of material, including six cannons, overboard. In 1969 a team of underwater archaeologists located the tossed cannons, which are now on display in various museums around the world.

DAVID COLEMAN/ALAMY/ACI

INSIDE THE REPLICA OF THE *ENDEAVOUR*, BUILT IN AUSTRALIA. THE PICTURE SHOWS THE DINING ROOM BELOW THE DECK.

The Guts of the Endeavour

When the British Navy was preparing for Cook's first voyage, they decided to purchase and refit the *Earl of Pembroke*, a collier built four years earlier. Although of modest size, it was a robust vessel. Its flat bottom was ideal for sailing in shallower waters, as when approaching a coastline and sailing up rivers. The ship was renamed the *Endeavour* and then renovated for the mission. Apart from strengthening the hull, a new deck was installed between the upper and lower decks to create ① a cabin and ② a dining room, both of which were reserved for the captain, officers, and scientists. Ship defenses included ③ 10 iron cannons and 12 swivel guns. ④ Provisions, including barrels containing 1,600

gallons of liquor, were kept in a large hold. After Cook's voyage the *Endeavour* was sold, renamed, and used as a transport ship during the War for Independence, until the British were forced to scuttle it off the North American coast near Rhode Island in 1778.

Dura-Europos: Saved by the Sands of Time

In the turmoil following World War I, British soldiers stumbled on the remains of a city founded by a successor of Alexander the Great. Preserved under centuries of sand, its vivid paintings reflected a vibrant, diverse community thriving on the trade routes linking East and West.

GEORG GERSTER/MGE FOTOSTOCK

Along the banks of the Euphrates River in March 1920, a British army unit was preparing to bed down for the night. Capt. M. C. Murphy, the expedition leader, ordered his men to set up camp on a strategic promontory in today's southeastern Syria. The soldiers began to excavate a trench near a ruined wall. As their shovels cleared away the desert sand, they revealed an extraordinary sight: a series of striking paintings of human figures on the wall.

"I discovered . . . some ancient wall paintings in a wonderful state of preservation," Murphy reported to his superiors. "The paintings are in the western corner of the fort and consist of life-size figures of three men, one woman, and three other figures partly obliterated. The colours are mainly reds, yellows and black."

In April 1920, as part of the post–World War I division of the Ottoman Empire's former territories, an agreement was struck at the San Remo Conference to split swathes of the Middle East between Britain and France. Under the terms of the treaty, the area where the ruins lay would pass into French hands. Anxious to excavate the site before France took over, the British government commissioned James Henry Breasted, an American archaeologist already working in Syria, to lead a reconnaissance mission to the site.

On arrival, Breasted used the British soldiers stationed there as manual labor to excavate the rest of the structure where the paintings had been found. He photographed them and made precise notes of the color scheme. The building, which came to be known as the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods, was then covered up again with sand to protect the structure and its treasures. The site would remain buried until the next excavation team arrived to study it a few years later.

Commercial Center

Breasted identified the ruins as the ancient city of Dura-Europos. Dura, which means "fortress," was founded by

THE GOD AFLAD, BORNE ON TWO LIONS, ON A FIRST-CENTURY B.C. RELIEF FROM DURA-EUROPOS. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DAMASCUS

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

1920
British soldiers in what is now Syria stumble on an ancient ruin containing intriguing paintings.

1922
James Henry Breasted conducts an initial study of the site, and concludes it is Dura-Europos, founded in the Seleucid era, in 303 B.C.

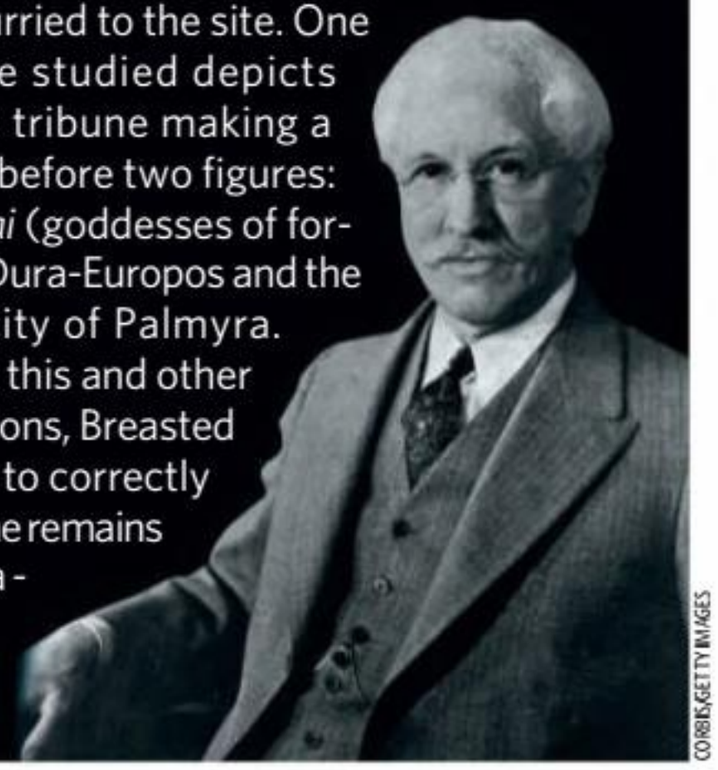
1928
Michael I. Rostovtzeff begins excavations at Dura-Europos, during which the full extent of its artistic treasures is revealed.

1932
A synagogue from the third century A.D. is found at the site. Its magnificent paintings are taken to the National Museum of Damascus.

DURA-EUROPOS in Syria, in an image published in 2003—just over a decade before Islamic State (ISIS) forces destroyed extensive parts of the site. Located on the Euphrates River, the city was a key military and commercial enclave beginning in the fourth century B.C.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

JUST DAYS after being notified by the British military of the discovery of ancient paintings, archaeologist James Henry Breasted (pictured) hurried to the site. One fresco he studied depicts a Roman tribune making a sacrifice before two figures: the *Tychai* (goddesses of fortune) of Dura-Europos and the nearby city of Palmyra. Based on this and other observations, Breasted was able to correctly identify the remains of Dura-Europos.



CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

the Babylonians. Centuries later, around 303 B.C., it was fortified as a military colony by Seleucus I Nicator, a former general of Alexander the Great. "Europos" was added to the city's name in honor of its founder's Macedonian heritage.

Seleucus had successfully taken control of Alexander's conquests from rival successors to create the Seleucid Empire, which stretched from northern Greece to India. Dura-Europos became a cosmopolitan caravan city, growing rich from the east-west trade routes that criss-crossed Seleucid territory. Its strategic location meant that Greeks, Parthians, Romans, and Persian Sassanids vied for control of this wealthy trade center.

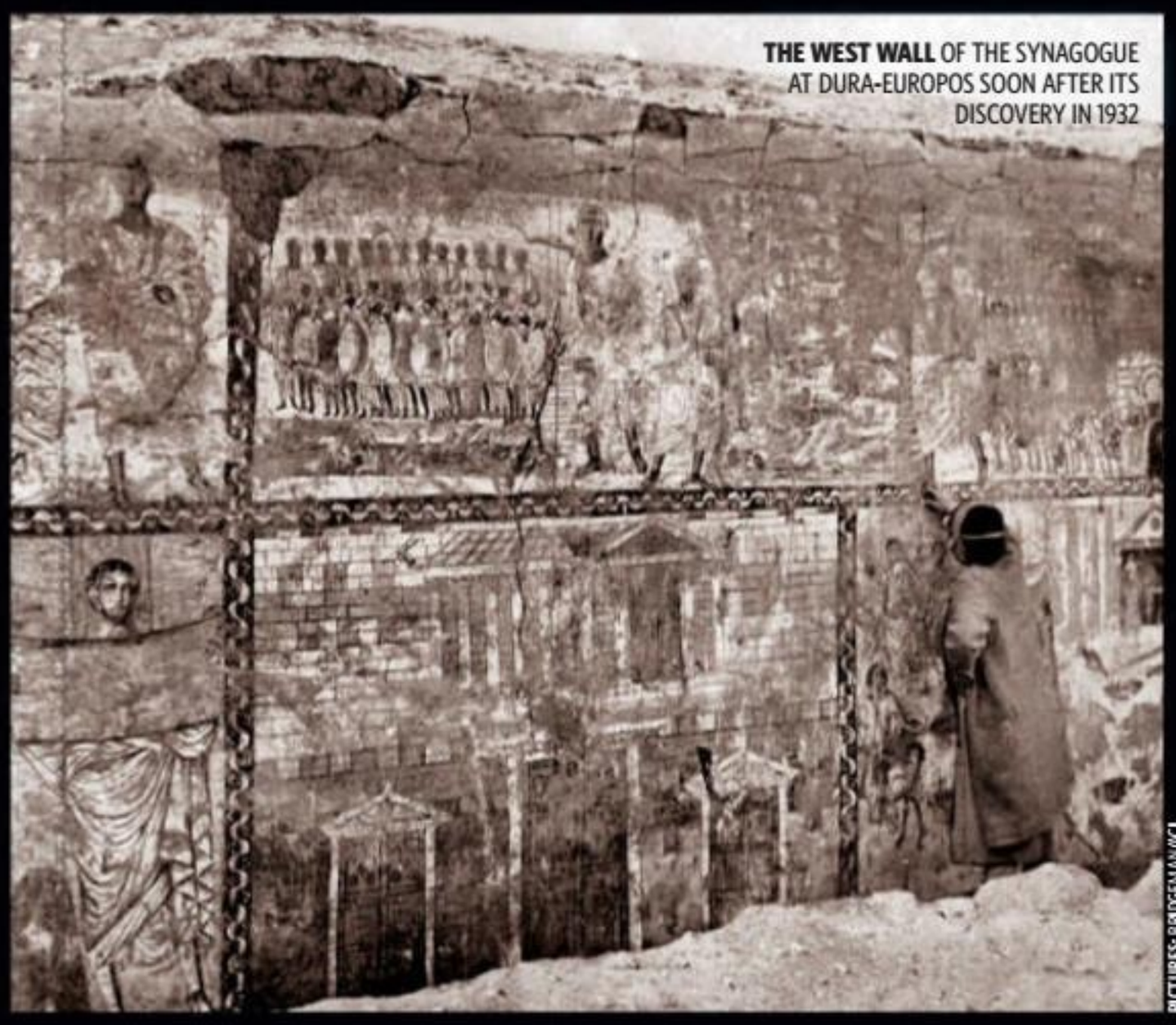
During the siege of Dura-Europos by the Sassanid

(continued on page 94)

EZEKIEL'S VISION of the resurrection of the dead and the return of the lost tribes of Israel. Synagogue, Dura-Europos

THE PAST IN LIVING COLOR

IN 1932, during the excavations at Dura-Europos, a synagogue was uncovered at the site, its magnificent paintings largely intact. The Greek-style murals depict various biblical scenes to instruct the faithful, including the sacrifice of Isaac, Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law, and the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel (above). The frescoes, which once covered all of its 23-foot-high walls, were produced around A.D. 250. Following their discovery, the paintings were moved to the National Museum of Damascus in the Syrian capital. The destruction of cultural artifacts in the ongoing war in Syria is a cause of huge concern to archaeologists, who are carefully monitoring the welfare of these remnants of a lost world.



THE WEST WALL OF THE SYNAGOGUE AT DURA-EUROPOS SOON AFTER ITS DISCOVERY IN 1932

PICTURES: BRIDGEMAN/ACI

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IN A DETAIL from a painting in the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods at Dura-Europos, the family of the priest Konon makes a sacrifice to the god Zeus-Baal.

GEORG GERSTER/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Persians in the third century A.D., tunnels were dug to destabilize the city walls. When the wall collapsed, many Roman defenders were buried alive.

When the soldiers' bodies were later uncovered by archaeologists, they were found in full armor and with their last payments still stored in their packs. The coins inside, minted in the year A.D. 256, gave archaeologists an approximate date for the Sassanid conquest of Dura-Europos. A brief period of Persian rule followed, after which the city was abandoned. For 17 centuries, desert sands buried the city and preserved its remains.

Cultural Blending

In his initial study Breasted highlighted the historical and artistic significance of the site's Roman-era paintings, which he judged to be a precursor in style to Byzantine mosaics. He urged the French and in particular the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres to continue excavations.

In 1922 the Belgian archaeologist Franz Cumont directed two excavations at Dura-Europos, but his work was interrupted by political upheaval in the region. Digging resumed in 1928, under the direction of Michael I. Rostovtzeff, a historian of Russian origin and professor at Yale University. The 10 digs carried out by Rostovtzeff between 1928 and 1937 uncovered a system of fortifications, three palaces, an agora, 17 religious buildings, five bathhouses, and a necropolis, as well as houses and shops. Among the site's most spectacular finds was the world's oldest Christian house church and an ancient synagogue, with its third-century A.D. paintings still intact.

Among the most fascinating features of the site are its religious paintings. In addition to evidence of an astonishing diversity of cults in this one city on the Euphrates, there was also proof of syncretism—combinations of religions. Some images show Greek gods fused with ancient Semitic deities—Artemis with Nanaia, Zeus with Baal. Others reflect the cult of Mithras, introduced to the city by Roman soldiers.

True to its history, Dura-Europos is enmeshed in a military conflict today. In 2014 the site was captured by the Islamic State (ISIS). The ruins have been extensively looted for artifacts to sell on the black market. Satellite imagery has revealed that as much as 70 percent of Dura-Europos has been destroyed, a true loss for humanity.

—Jorge García Sánchez

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Next Issue

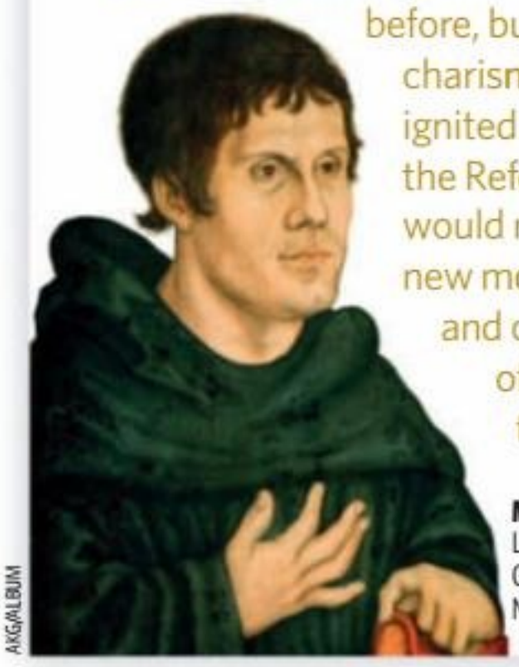
SCALA, FLORENCE

1917: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION EXPLODES

A CENTURY AGO, the Russian Revolution began in Petrograd as a bread riot. Events rapidly escalated from there: Tsar Nicholas II lost power, and Bolshevik Vladimir Lenin returned from exile to lead the movement. That summer, Russia's fate hung in the balance as workers staged armed demonstrations (left) and revolutionaries and moderates struggled for control. After the Bolsheviks seized power in October, Lenin crushed the opposition, withdrew Russian forces from World War I, and set his country on a path to civil war.

MARTIN LUTHER'S SACRED PROTEST

FIVE HUNDRED years ago a German friar began a religious revolution. Published in 1517, Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses questioned the corruption he saw in the Catholic Church. Others had railed against clerical abuses before, but Martin Luther's charisma and stubbornness ignited a new movement, the Reformation, which would redraw maps, put new monarchs on thrones, and cause centuries of religious conflict throughout Europe.



AKG/ALBUM

MARTIN LUTHER BY LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER. GERMANISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM, NUREMBERG

That's Entertainment! Rome's Sea Battles

First staged by Julius Caesar, who used thousands of convicts to stage a mock sea battle on an artificial lake, the naumachia (naval combat) was a huge hit with the Roman public. Caesar's successors created spectacles of greater complexity, perhaps including flooding the Colosseum for a naval fight.

Bullish on Ancient Crete

Named for the legendary king Minos—son of Zeus and enemy of Athens—the Minoan civilization of Crete dominated the eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium B.C. Its lavish palaces, pottery, and command of the sea deeply colored life and legends in ancient Greece.

Egyptian Obelisks Rise

Carved from stone and covered in hieroglyphs, obelisks are one of ancient Egypt's most iconic achievements. Often associated with the sun god Re, these stone towers honored the great deeds of the pharaohs through the ages.

China and Japan

EHRMAN NEEDLEPOINT KITS

Textiles, ceramics and paintings from East Asia have been a constant source of inspiration to our designers. These patterns, adapted from Chinese and Japanese artworks, make wonderful needlepoint designs which would look equally good in traditional or contemporary settings.

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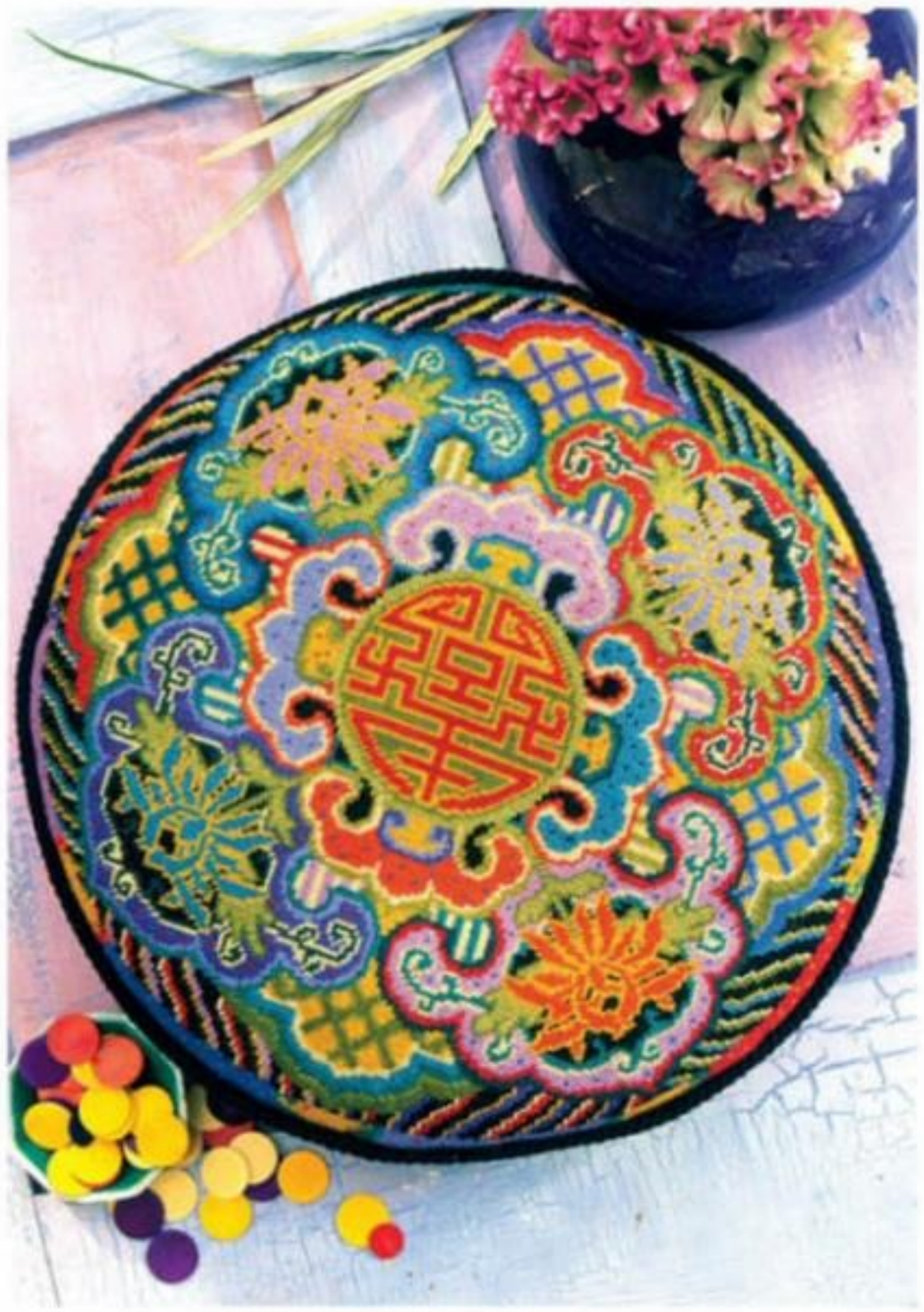

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